

Luke 4:16-21

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

“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.”**

And he rolled up the scroll and 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.”

It is written (γέγραπται).

The perfect tense. “It has been written, and stands written.”

This is the theme for our Sundays in Lent this year. In today’s text, Jesus has just begun his ministry. He goes to the synagogue at home and reads from Isaiah what is written about the Messiah. And then he says, **“Yep. That’s me!”**

It is written that the messiah would proclaim:

- good news to the poor.
- liberty to the captives,
- recovering of sight to the blind,

- liberty those who are oppressed,
- the year of the Lord's favor.

And they were impressed!

And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth.

But then, doubts crept in.

And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

So, Jesus said to them,

"Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb,

' "Physician, heal yourself." What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.' "

And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land,

and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.

And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha,

and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."

Let that sink in for just a moment.

Jesus just told the people of his hometown, where he grew up, that he was the messiah they had been waiting for their entire lives and that he came not only for the people of Israel but for the Gentiles as well!

How did they respond to that?

When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.

And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.

They drove him to the cliff's edge shouting out **"Fake news!"**

- ***That's not true!***
- ***That's not what we believe!***
- ***Messiah will come for us only!***
- ***You deserve to die!***

We hear a lot about **fake news**, don't we?

The modern version of this actually began around 2005 with Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert. They gave their slant on the news as a comedy routine.

What's interesting is that millions adopted this as their primary source of information about current events. But fake news is hardly a recent phenomenon in America.

Throughout our history it has appeared under many names:

- propaganda,
- misinformation,

- yellow journalism,
- libel and even
- lies.

In the 1796 presidential race between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, Jefferson's supporters let it be known that Adams wanted to be king of the United States by trying to marry off one of his sons to a daughter of English King George III, a move blocked by George Washington who intervened just in time to stop it.

Adams' supporters had newspapers reporting that if Jefferson were president, "Murder, robbery, rape, adultery and incest will be openly taught and practiced," that the country would be "soaked with blood, and the nation black with crimes."

- Political parties owned newspapers in those days.
- And you thought this was something new?

Today the concept of **"fake news"** has been broadened!

You don't like the political viewpoint someone is expressing? No problem. Dismiss it by saying it's **fake news**. End of discussion.

Isn't this exactly what's going on in Nazareth?

What is extremely interesting here is that Jesus stops reading from Isaiah 61 just before it says:

"to proclaim the day of vengeance of our God."

- proclaim good news to the poor.
- proclaim liberty to the captives,
- recovering of sight to the blind,

- to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
- to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Yep, that's my mission statement.

That vengeance stuff?

Not why I'm here!

That is not what they wanted to hear!

That was not what they believed!

- Sure, the Messiah will do all that good stuff, but only for us!
- Only for the children of God.
- Only for the children of Abraham.
- Not for the Gentile dogs!
- Messiah will **crush them and put us in charge** of the world!

Last year in the U.K., a poll showed that 70% of people think that most wars in world history have been caused by religions and religious extremists.

According to Philip and Axelrod's three-volume Encyclopedia of Wars (published 2008), there have been more than 1,700 wars fought in human history. Of these, the authors include only 123 of them (7 percent) as being related to a religious cause.

The great wars of the 20th century that blighted the entire world had no religious cause.

The four dictators in the 20th Century responsible for killing 10s of millions (including their own citizens) were committed atheists and proponents of Darwinism. If we're all animals, the ones with the biggest teeth make the rules.

The majority of Israelites in Jesus' day were looking for a warrior messiah.

Jesus said that he was the **good shepherd.**

Jesus said that he came **to seek and to save everyone who was lost.**

Jesus said that the **greatest in his kingdom would be like a little child.**

Jesus came to **serve and give his life**, not to be served and to rule.

Matthew 26:30–35

*And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night. For **it is written,***

'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."

Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." Jesus said to him,

"Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."

Peter said to him,

"Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!"

And all the disciples said the same.

He came not to kill and conquer but as the Lamb of God and the Good Shepherd to give his life for us all.

John 10:7–16

So, Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them.

I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.

So, there will be one flock, one shepherd.

What makes Jesus' words unacceptable to them is that they don't conform to their belief that the Messiah would destroy Israel's enemies. Jesus talking about God's mercy to a Gentile widow and a Syrian soldier doesn't fit that image. Therefore, in their minds, Jesus isn't the Messiah after all and what he says is **fake news.**

And they got really angry!

Imagine being in church, listening to God's word, having Jesus right in front of you and your response to that is to commit murder?

Shouldn't be too hard to imagine. People today become passionate about their adopted cause and pity the person that disagrees or gets in their way.

Disagree with me and you are at best a fool and at worst a waste of oxygen!

As followers of the Messiah, the Good Shepherd, we should follow his mission to the world.

- proclaim good news to the poor.
- proclaim liberty to the captives,
- recovering of sight to the blind,
- to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
- to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Ephesians 4:25–5:2

Therefore, having put away falsehood,

let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

Be angry and do not sin;

do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.

Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children.

And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

This is what is written about the Messiah, our Savior and our Lord Jesus Christ. And we who are called by his name, who follow him, should be like him as we serve in his mission to the world.