**The Spirit of the Lord Is upon Me**

**The Word**

Read together Luke 4:14-30

**The Big Idea**

Jesus has come for all those who recognize their deep need for him. To all those who do, he offers a “Jubilee” of forgiveness, grace, and acceptance. But those who don’t recognize their need for him will constantly find themselves at odds with him.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. How did Sunday’s passage give you a better or deeper understanding of who Jesus is and what he came to do?

2. On Sunday, we talked very little about the townspeople’s reaction to Jesus at Nazareth. As you read the second half of the story that focuses on that, what seem to be the core issues that offended them so deeply?

3. On Sunday we talked about how, in our culture today, our perceived sense of self-sufficiency can dull our spiritual lives and leave us very lukewarm in our faith. In what senses do you personally relate to that description? And what are some steps you might take in this season to improve that reality in your life?

4. Jesus dedicated his life to the poor and needy, and as Jesus followers it is our responsibility to follow in his example. Poverty takes many different forms, and so each one of us has to find our own way of doing this. How is God calling you to more faithfully engage the poor and needy? What might that look like at this time in your life?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Jesus’ thesis statement

This scene at Nazareth succinctly captures the essence of what Jesus has come to do and how people will respond to him.

II. Jesus’ declaration of the essence of his ministry (v. 18-19)

 A. Jesus is the Spirit-inspired servant of the Lord (v. 18)

B. Echoing Old Testament themes in Isaiah and Leviticus, Jesus is declaring a home-coming for God’s exiled people, and he is proclaiming the time of Jubilee when debts are canceled and slaves are freed.

C. Jesus’ ministry is a holistic one of word (notice “preach” and “proclaim”) and deed (release, recovery of sight, etc.)

 D. Jesus’ ministry is directed to the poor, imprisoned, blind, and oppressed

1. This description will include both literal expressions and spiritual expressions of these needy states

a. Jesus will free literally poor people but also morally/spiritually/relationally poor people

b. Jesus will bring sight to literally blind people, but he will also open the eyes of spiritually blind people (= open their hearts and minds)

c. The word “freedom” in v. 18 can mean release from financial debt, release from Satan’s binding power, and release from sin (i.e. forgiveness), depending on the context.

2. So together this group of people embraces all who, for whatever reason, recognize their fundamental brokenness and need for Jesus

3. To all who recognize their deep need for him, Jesus offers good news of forgiveness, friendship, and healing

E. Consider the example of the sinful woman who anoints Jesus’ feet (Luke 7:36-50)

1. She is poor in so many ways (morally, spiritually, relationally)

2. She finds in Jesus a home of forgiveness, acceptance, and healing.

3. Her response is one of profound gratitude and extravagant generosity towards Jesus. She has experience Jubilee!

III. There are some who don’t recognize their need for Jesus

 A. The Pharisees in the woman-anointing-Jesus story

 1. They can’t imagine they need Jesus as much as she does

2. Jesus tells a story about two people who have been forgiven different amounts of debt. The one forgiven the bigger debt loves more and is far more grateful because they recognize the need that has been filled

 B. Jesus’ hometown

1. Their overfamiliarity with him keeps them from recognizing who he is and how much they need him.

C. Jesus plainly says that he didn’t come for people who don’t think they need him (see Luke 5:31-32)

IV. Conclusion

A. As Jesus followers, we must identify ourselves with the poor, blind, imprisoned, and oppressed. We must recognize our fundamental need for Jesus.

 1. This can be challenging in our successful and wealthy culture

a. It’s easy to live with a perceived sense of self-sufficiency.

b. Our sense of self-sufficiency dulls our spiritual lives and makes us lukewarm

c. Consider the lukewarm church in Laodicea (see Revelation 3:14-20)

 2. So we must constantly repent of our sense of self-sufficiency.

 3. Gratitude is a good marker that we are on the right track.

B. As Jesus followers, our lives are to be about ministering to these needy kinds of people (poor, blind, imprisoned, oppressed).

1. The church must step out into the world with hearts of compassion for those in need.

2. Again this can be challenging in a culture that is attracted not to the needy but to the healthy, influential, and successful.

3. Needyness takes so many different forms, and each one of us has to find our own unique way of loving those in need.

C. “Christianity is just one beggar showing another beggar where to find bread.”