

The Good News of God: Good News to the Poor

Zack Phillips, Covenant Church

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1. Scripture for today

Luke 4:16-21 (NIV) He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

2. Good News to the Poor /s Good News

In Luke 4:16-21, Jesus proclaims offers words from Isaiah 61:1-2 and Isaiah 58:6 as his synagogue teaching. These words are:

- Jesus’ first spoken words in the gospel;
- The only summary of the content of his synagogue teaching;
- Repeated when John the Baptists asks about Jesus’ identity (7:18-23).

After teaching about the rejection of prophets and Elijah/ Elisha, Jesus continues to teach in synagogues and enact his very teaching by exorcising demons (4:33-35) and healing the sick (4:38-40). In summarizing the chapter, verse 43 reveals: “But [Jesus] said, ‘I must *proclaim the good news* of the kingdom of God to the other towns *also*, because that is why I was sent.’”

3. Some “Hard Sayings” of Jesus

Luke 6:24-25 (NIV) “But woe to you who are rich,
for you have already received your comfort.
25 Woe to you who are well fed now,
for you will go hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will mourn and weep.

Luke 16:19-31 (NIV) “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.’ He said, ‘Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ He said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”