

Small Group Guide

HE CAME: TO FREE THE CAPTIVES

The Church at Brook Hills, Dr. Bart Box

November 29, 2009

Luke 4:16-30

This guide is designed to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use, and there may be instances when you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience, not complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool rather than a rigid teaching task list.

Connect

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to share about a case of misunderstanding in their lives. What role did faulty assumptions play in the situation? Possible examples could come from work (supervisor/employee), from marriage (husband/wife), from parenting (parent/child) or from school (teacher/student).

Share with your group that the Jews in Nazareth, as well as others in Jesus' day, seem to have had some faulty assumptions about the coming of the Messiah.

Explain that today we will explore some incorrect misunderstandings and correct explanations regarding Jesus' coming from Luke 4:16–30.

Option 2

Invite learners to tell about a time when their liberty, or freedom, was restricted in some way. How did it feel? (Suggest thinking about having a broken leg/arm; being grounded; visiting a country hostile to Christianity; etc)

Now discuss things that can limit our freedom spiritually. (Examples: ties to specific sins or to the world, lack of discipline, lack of access to the gospel, etc)

Explain that today we will consider how the gospel brings freedom to us for God's glory and our good, based on Luke 4:16–30.

Review the Message

He Came...To Set the Captives Free

Wonders to Behold...

- **We see a powerful gospel.**
 - **Gospel—good news to the poor—summarized Jesus' ministry.**
 - **The gospel addresses the most profound needs our souls.**
- **We see a powerful God.**

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- Many of Jesus' contemporaries failed to perceive His true identity as God.
- The gospel is powerful because standing behind it is the God of the gospel—Jesus.

Discussion...

- Ask for a volunteer(s) to read Luke 4:16–30.
 - Why do you think Jesus chose Isaiah 61:1–2 to read from in his home town?
 - What is the significance of His choice?
 - Why is this good news?
- Did Jesus come just for the economically poor? Compare Luke 6:20 and Matthew 5:3. How are we all poor?
- How are we all captives? (Romans 8:7–8) How are we all blind? (2 Corinthians 4:4) How are we all oppressed? (1 Peter 5:8) How are we all debtors? (1 Peter 1:18–19)
- How does Jesus meet all of these profound needs?
- Ask a volunteer to read Isaiah 9:6–7.
 - What does this passage say about Jesus?
 - How does this affect our understanding of the gospel?
 - What about our understanding of Christmas?
- Why do you think so many of Jesus' contemporaries failed to understand His identity (Luke 4:22)? What is the evidence of his true identity? (see Luke 7:22-23)

Application...

- How and why do we sometimes become numb to the power and goodness of the gospel?
- When do we tend to forget our spiritual poverty and need?
- What does our sin deserve? What has He given us instead? What can the power of God free us from today? What can the power of the gospel free us to give or to do today?
- This Christmas how can we renew our gratefulness and appreciation of what Christ has done for us?
- How does Jesus' true identity become the fuel for our worship and our lives?

Dangers to Avoid...

- We may misunderstand the intended scope of Jesus' mission.
 - Many Jews of Jesus' day expected the blessing of Israel alone.
 - Jesus is not interested in local affection alone; Jesus desires global adoration.
- We may misunderstand the radical mercy behind Jesus' mission.
 - The Jews of Jesus' day longed for military vengeance.
 - Today is the day of salvation, not condemnation.

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- **We may misunderstand the personal relevance of Jesus' mission.**
 - **Many Jews failed to see their unity with the Gentiles.**
 - **He came to proclaim good news to all of us.**

Discussion...

- Why do you think Jesus continued speaking after verse 22? What was He up to?
- Why would Jesus' listeners become so upset when he referenced the stories of Elijah and Elisha? (1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 5) What was it that infuriated them? (As He told them of God's mercy and favor to a widow in Sidon and an army commander in Syria, Jesus was exposing their localization of God's favor and blessings instead of seeing themselves as vehicles of God's blessings for the entire world.)
- What evidence does the New Testament give that God desires universal adoration? That the gospel is for all nations?
- Compare Luke 4:18–19 and Isaiah 61:1–2. What part of Isaiah 61:2 does Jesus leave out? Why?
- Compare 2 Corinthians 6:2, and 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10. What day is today? What day is coming? What does this mean for us today? What does it mean for those outside of Christ today?
- What do you think Jesus' message was for His hearers that day in Nazareth? Do you think they considered themselves poor or blind or captive? Do you think they saw themselves as emissaries of God's grace?
- Why did they reject Jesus?

Application...

- How can we too limit the scope of Jesus' mission in our lives?
 - Is there anyone whom are we excluding from God's grace?
 - Do we see ourselves as emissaries or just recipients of God's grace?
 - How can we serve those we find difficult to love or those we ignore?
 - How can we pray for our enemies?
 - How can we pray for the nations?
 - How does this affect our understanding of the gospel?
- God says today is the day of salvation. How does this address the sins of our past, present, and future? What should our attitude be toward even the most hardened of sinners, even those who persecute the church?
- How can we choose forgiveness over vengeance in our lives?
- How can we avoid rejecting Jesus' message that we are all poor and needy sinners?
 - What keeps us from admitting how messed up we are?
 - How does Jesus turn this bad news into good news?
 - How does Jesus free us from our idolatry?
- How is the gospel the essence of Christmas?

Hope to Embrace...

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God make this Christmas a celebration of Your gospel—greater liberty, better vision, less oppression, and greater freedom—for Your glory and the good of Your people.

Discussion...

- What are some things the world celebrates at Christmas?
- Consider those things in light of the gospel. How do some of these celebrations align with the gospel to an extent? How are others a rejection of the gospel?

Application...

- How can we remember Jesus Christ this Christmas? (2 Timothy 2:8–9)
- How can we know greater liberty and freedom in our own lives this Christmas?
- How can we free others from oppression?
- How does the gospel bring freedom for your past, power for today, and assurance of victory tomorrow?
- How can we make much of the gospel in our lives and for the sake of others this Christmas?