

07. Luke 4:14 - 5:26



JESUS' MINISTRY IN GALILEE Part 1 Luke 4:14 - 6:11

Luke 4:14-15

(Mark 1:14-15)

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

Jesus was conceived when the Holy Spirit came upon his mother and God covered her with his glory-cloud (1:35).

At his baptism the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus (3:22).

Filled with the Holy Spirit, he was led into the wilderness (4:1).

Now, 'filled with the power of the Spirit', he returns to Galilee. Luke leaves us in no doubt that it is God who is carrying out his divine purpose in Jesus.

Luke 4:16-19 (Jesus' agenda)

‘When Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. 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 (Isaiah 62:1-2):



“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news [already 1:19; 2:10; 3:18] to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim a light of revelation to the Gentiles (2:30,32; see also 3:6; Acts 13:47; 26:17-18,23).
release to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind

to let the oppressed go free (from Isaiah 58:6).

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.’

Luke 4:20-24

‘Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”

Jesus said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’”

And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown”. (see Mark 6:4)

Luke 4:25-30

The truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. (1 Kings 17:9)

There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”

(2 Kings 5)

When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.



Luke wants to establish two central themes from the start.

The first concerns the essence of Jesus' mission: God's word of grace to the poor – a grace not limited to the Jews.

The second is that rejection cannot thwart God's design.

Luke 4:31-35 (Mark 1:21-26)

He went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was teaching them on the sabbath. They were astounded at his teaching, because he spoke with authority.

In the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, “Let us alone! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” When the demon had thrown him down before them, he came out of him without having done him any harm.



Luke the physician distinguishes between obviously physical diseases and what we would call psychic disorders (see Luke 6:18; 11:24-26; Acts 5:16; 8:7). He understands the latter to be the result of demonic possession, as in the present scene (compare 8:29; 9:42).

Be silent! At this early stage of his ministry, Jesus was anxious to avoid the kind of publicity that would bring him into conflict with the authorities. In fact it was actions such as the one described in this scene — actions performed on the Sabbath and so running counter to the prevailing understanding of God's will concerning the Sabbath rest — that did eventually lead to his condemnation by the Jewish religious leadership. When opposition came, Jesus faced it; but it was not his intention to provoke it unnecessarily.

Luke 4:36-37 (Mark 1:27-28)

They were all amazed and kept saying to one another, “What kind of word is this? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and out they come!” And a report about him began to reach every place in the region.



Luke 4:38-39

(Mark 1:29-31)

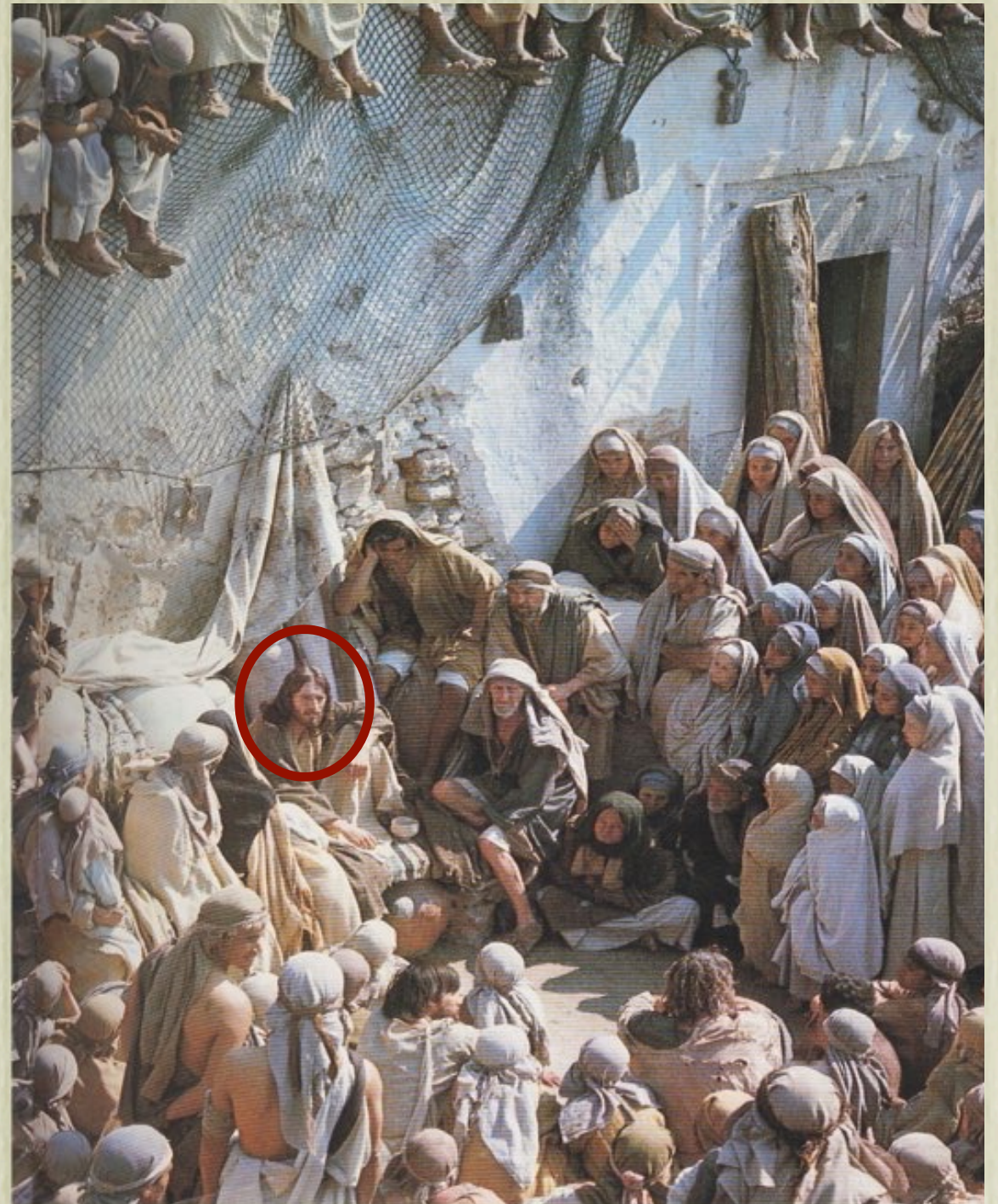
After leaving the synagogue he entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked him about her. Then he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began to **serve** (διακόνεω) them.



Luke 4:40-41

(Mark 1:32-34)

As the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them. Demons also came out of many, *shouting, “You are the Son of God!”* But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that *he was the Messiah.*



Luke 4:42-44

(Mark 1:35-39)



At daybreak he departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowds were looking for him; and when they reached him, they wanted to prevent him from leaving them. But he said to them, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for **I was sent for this purpose.**”

So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea.

Miracles (δύναμις - 'deed of power')

'All in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power (δύναμις) came out from him and healed all of them' (Luke 6:19).

Peter is speaking

'Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know' (Acts 2:22).

'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him' (Acts 10:38).

Since God is LOVE, the 'deeds of power' are expressions of the powerful love that binds Jesus to the Father.

By 'miracle' we are not speaking of God intervening in history and setting aside the so-called 'laws of nature'. These model and describe behaviour. They do not claim to exhaust the dynamism of nature or the relationships, processes, and causal interconnectedness of the natural world.

The surprise of a miracle alerts us to something that is ever present but which our achieved knowledge can obscure: namely, that it is the mysterious initiative of God to which we are responding in everything we do and seek to do. It is our longing for communion with God that is the mainspring of our desire to know and love.

When we come to some understanding we may fall into the temptation of forgetting this and thinking we are the organisers and initiators. A miracle surprises us into recognising that we are wrong.

‘miracles, wonders, and signs’ (Acts 2:22)

By ‘miracle’ we mean wonderful happenings that take place through natural causes that are beyond our present modelling: causes held in being and propelled by God’s self-giving love, drawing the whole of creation into divine communion. They function as signs of God’s mysterious presence and action.

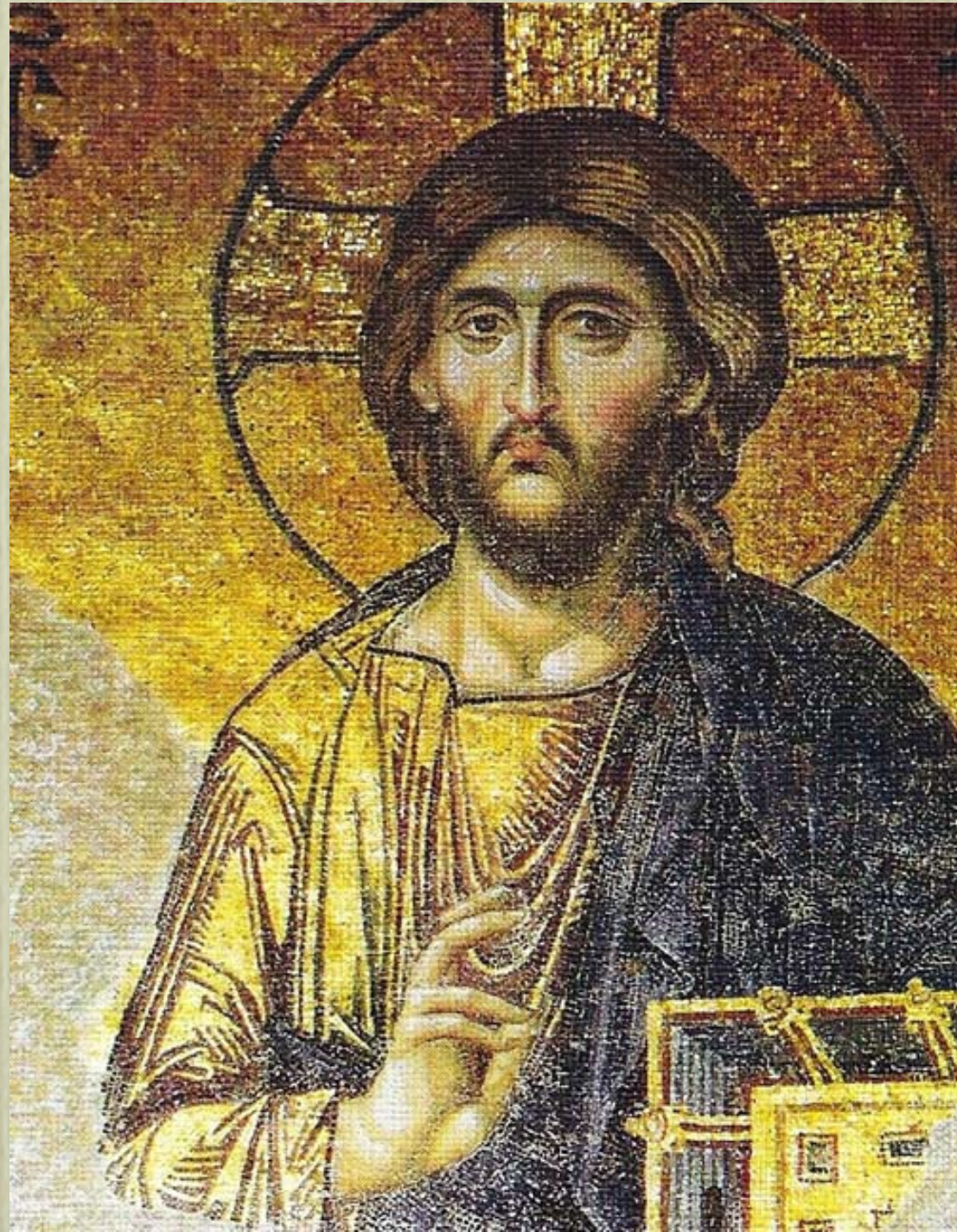


‘Whenever something new arises, whenever life is awakened and reality reaches ecstatically beyond itself, in all seeking and striving, in every ferment and birth, and even more in the beauty of creation, something of the being and activity of **God’s Spirit** is manifested.’

(Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 227).

‘God gives to creatures themselves the capacity for the new. Because of God’s creative and redeeming presence to creatures, they can become something they were not. When matter comes to life on earth, when life becomes self-conscious and personal, this occurs through God enabling creation to transcend itself and become something new. Above all when one of us in the human and creaturely community, Jesus of Nazareth, is so radically open to God, so one with God, that we rightly see him as God-with-us, then we can say that in this person creation transcends itself into God.’

(Denis Edwards, *How God Acts*, 158).



Jesus was fully open to God's Spirit, God's creative action. God gives the Spirit to Jesus 'without measure'(John 3:34). Jesus loved perfectly.

'**Miracles**' show what perfect love can do when it is welcomed in 'faith'.

'If it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you' (Luke 11:20).

‘God did extraordinary miracles through Paul’ (Acts 19:11)

Jesus revealed God as love = self-giving. Creation is an explosion of this self-giving. We become what we are called to be to the extent that we love = to the extent that we ‘participate in the divine nature’ (2 Peter 1:4).

Jesus calls disciples to share his mission : Luke 5:1-3

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the **word of God**, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.



Luke 5:4-7

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.



Luke 5:8-11

But when Simon **Peter** saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." (repentance for the forgiveness of sin)



When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. (see Mark 1:18)

With the sense of awe and wonder comes Simon's realisation of his sinfulness.

We recall the reaction of Isaiah when he is encountered by God in the temple: 'Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!' (Isaiah 6:5).

Jesus tells Simon not to be afraid (5:10), words we have already heard addressed by the Angel of the Lord to Zechariah (1:13), to Mary (1:30), and to the shepherds (2:10).

Simon is right to realise his smallness when confronted with God's action, but his focus must remain on God, and not on himself. The appropriate response is one of gratitude and wonder. Finally, Jesus reveals to Simon God's call: he is to go out and catch people. The Greek word translated here 'catch' (ζωγρεω) is more literally translated 'catch alive'. The disciples are to rescue people from the dark depths and haul them to life.

compare John 21:4-8

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, “Have you caught anything” They answered him, “No.” He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!”

When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he ... jumped into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish.

Luke 5:12-14

Mark 1:40-45

Once, when he was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, “Lord, if you want to, you can make me clean.” Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, “Of course I want to. Be made clean.” Immediately the leprosy left him. And Jesus ordered him to tell no one. “Go,” he said, “and show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, for a testimony to them.”



The law is clear. As soon as anyone noticed signs of the discolouring of the skin which could prove to be leprosy they were required to disclose this to the priest, who, in turn, had no choice but to banish the sick person from the community.

Furthermore, everyone was taught that to disobey the law in this matter was to disobey God:

‘The person who has the leprous disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head be dishevelled; and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’ He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp’ (Leviticus 13:45-46).

Who of us does not need healing? Who of us does not know the feeling of being alone, isolated from others, a 'leper' and an outcast? There are two questions we might ask ourselves. Firstly, do we really want to be healed? And secondly, can we, like this simple man, dare to approach Jesus and say to him: 'If you choose, you can make me clean', believing that he does want to, and will not fail to hear our cry?

This is not to say that we will necessarily obtain the healing that we think we need. But we can be certain that God, who knows us, will grace us with whatever healing will release us to be more closely united to God's Son, Jesus, and more able to love. To know that is enough. So let us, like children, dare to ask for whatever we desire, trusting that God knows best what is good for us. Furthermore, let us learn from Jesus how to welcome those who feel themselves to be outcasts. Who knows what miracles of healing are possible if we are willing to share each other's pain?

Luke 5:15-16

But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad;
many crowds would gather to hear him
and to be cured of their diseases.

But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.



As in an earlier scene (4:42-44), Jesus makes space in his life for intimate prayer-communion with God. His healing ministry flows from this prayer, for it is God who anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power, and: 'He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him' (Acts 10:38).

Luke 5:17

One day, while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting near by (they had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem); and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.

His healing ministry flows from this prayer, for it is God who anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power, and: 'He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him' (Acts 10:38).

Luke 5:18-19

(Mark 2:3-4)

Just then some men came, carrying a paralysed man on a bed. They were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus.



Luke 5:20-21

(Mark 2:5-7)

When he saw their **faith**, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

Then the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, “Who is this who is speaking blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Luke 5:22-26 (Mark 2:8-12)

When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’?

But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” – he said to the one who was paralysed – “I say to you, stand up and take your bed and go to your home.”

Immediately he stood up before them, took what he had been lying on, and went to his home, glorifying God.

Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, “We have seen strange things today.”