

Jesus: God Who Saves

Luke 4 14-21

Sermon

Hobart, January 12th, 2014

Devonport, January 18th, 2014

Launceston, January 19th, 2014

Isaiah 61:1-6, 10-11

- ¹ The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me,
for the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted
and to proclaim that captives will be released
and prisoners will be freed.*
- ² He has sent me to tell those who mourn
that the time of the LORD's favor has come,
and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies.
- ³ To all who mourn in Israel,
he will give a crown of beauty for ashes,
a joyous blessing instead of mourning,
festive praise instead of despair.
In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks
that the LORD has planted for his own glory.
- ⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins,
repairing cities destroyed long ago.
They will revive them,
though they have been deserted for many generations.
- ⁵ Foreigners will be your servants.
They will feed your flocks
and plow your fields
and tend your vineyards.
- ⁶ You will be called priests of the LORD,
ministers of our God.
You will feed on the treasures of the nations
and boast in their riches.
- v10** I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God!
For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation
and draped me in a robe of righteousness.
I am like a bridegroom in his wedding suit
or a bride with her jewels.
- ¹¹ The Sovereign LORD will show his justice to the nations of the world.
Everyone will praise him!
His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring,
with plants springing up everywhere.¹

* Greek version reads *and the blind will see*. Compare Luke 4:18.

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Is 61:1-11). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

Luke 4:14-21

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

¹⁴ Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region. ¹⁵ He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

¹⁶ When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures.

¹⁷ The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the LORD is upon me,
 for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.
 He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,
 that the blind will see,
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¹⁹ and that the time of the LORD's favor has come.”^{*,2}

²⁰ He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. ²¹ Then he began to speak to them. “The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!”

²² Everyone spoke well of him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from his lips. “How can this be?” they asked. “Isn't this Joseph's son?”²

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INTRODUCTION:

I. A COMMON SCENE IN OUR TV NEWS

A. IS ONE OF PEOPLE BEING RESCUED FROM SOME SORT OF DANGEROUS SITUATION

1. Whether it be from the upper floor of a burning building
2. From a sinking refugee boat
3. From a fall up in the mountains or lost in the bush

B. ONE OF THE MOST RECENT HAS BEEN THE PEOPLE ON THE SHIP LOCKED UP IN THE SEA ICE IN ANTARCTICA

1. Even the rescue ship itself got stuck
2. It is always a great relief and joy when people are saved from such life threatening situations
3. But a time of grief and tragic loss when such rescues fail, and even worse when people reject rescue and insist they can take care of themselves
 - a) Surprisingly often in floods people refuse to be rescued;
 - (1) **There was an example late last year in the US state of Colorado;**

Ten military helicopters returned to rescue survivors, but they only retrieved eight people by late afternoon.

Many, perhaps hundreds, refuse to leave despite dire warnings from rescuers. Photos of obliterated roads were shown to persuade people to change their minds. The efforts got only one person to relent Wednesday.³

³ <http://www.coloradoan.com/viewart/20130918/NEWS01/309180016/Many-those-cut-off-from-floods-refuse-rescue>

S.P.S:

II. NEED OF HELP AND RESCUE

A. MOST OF US FIND OURSELVES IN SITUATIONS FROM TIME TO TIME WHERE WE ARE IN DESPARATE NEED OF HELP

1. We may be mentally drained and at the end of our rope
 - a) Feeling that we can't go any further, or extricate ourselves from a depressing or dark place in our lives
2. We may be physically worn out and lacking strength to deal with an overwhelming situation
 - a) Just too many things in our way or standing against us for us to overcome and free ourselves from
3. We may be spiritually drained and feeling weak and ineffective
 - a) Or feeling guilty and unable to do what we believe we ought to

B. TOO MANY OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL TRAPPED IN THEIR LIVES

1. Teens often find approaching adulthood and all its challenges too much
2. Addictions overwhelm so many too, of all ages

C. OUR HUMAN NATURE GETS US INTO SO MANY PROBLEMS

1. And our societies are confronted by so many huge social, economic and environmental issues

A. TODAY WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT AN OVERVIEW OF HOW GOD RESCUES US FROM OUR PLACES OF DARKNESS AND OUR TRAPPED AND HELPLESS SITUATIONS

1. The answer is what the Gospel, the Good News is all about

B. PRAYER

BODY:

III. GOD HELPS THEM WHO HELP THEMSELVES

A. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE OLD PROVERBIAL SAYING;

1. “God helps them who help themselves”?

a) Is there any truth to it?

b) How is it misleading?

B. FOR MANY RELIGIOUS PEOPLE, THE ANSWER TO THOSE WHO ARE HAVING A TOUGH TIME IS A MORAL ONE?

1. What are you doing wrong?

a) OR; What are you not doing right?

2. Many of us tend to see people’s problems in terms of cause and effect, morals and behaviour

3. The answer many tend to give to people who are struggling is formulaic;

a) Are you praying enough?

b) Are you praying the right way?

c) You must have a wrong attitude

d) You need to repent more or better

e) You aren’t obedient enough to God

f) You don’t have enough faith

4. God’s rescue is seen as being a transaction, a deal

a) You do the right thing and I will bless you

b) Do the wrong thing and you will be cursed

c) After all, that is what we read in several places in the Old Testament

d) This is the view that most religions have had in ancient and modern times

(1) You have to do what your God requires in order to please him and get him to then bless and help you

C. WHY DO PEOPLE TEND TO THINK THAT WAY?

1. Because of the way they see God
2. They see him as not really ready or interested in helping us unless we are good or nice enough to him to have him help us
 - a) In other words we make him out to be more like an average human leader acting only out of self-interest, position, superiority and power,
 - b) Failing to see that he is drastically and amazingly different
3. The entry of the Son of God into human life show how different God is, and how and why he rescues us

IV. LUKE 4:14-21

Luke 4:14-21

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for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,
that the blind will see,
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²² Everyone spoke well of him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from his lips. "How can this be?" they asked. "Isn't this Joseph's son?"⁴

A. THIS WAS THE MESSAGE AT JESUS' BIRTH

1. This was the message of the apostles and the early church
2. God loves us, and so he has sent his Son to rescue us

B. WHAT HAS HE PRIMARILY RESCUED US FROM?

1. Ourselves
 - a) Our living apart from God and his love and benevolent and gracious care and nurture

C. "JESUS" MEANS "GOD RESCUES" OR "GOD SAVES"

1. At Jesus' birth it was made very clear that his mission was to rescue his people;

D. BEFORE THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, HIS FATHER WAS INSPIRED TO SAY;

Luke 1:68-79

Zechariah's Prophecy

⁶⁸ "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has visited and redeemed his people.

⁶⁹ He has sent us a mighty Savior*
from the royal line of his servant David,

⁷⁰ just as he promised
through his holy prophets long ago.

⁷¹ Now we will be saved from our enemies
and from all who hate us.

⁴Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Lk 4:14-22). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

* Greek *has raised up a horn of salvation for us*.

72 He has been merciful to our ancestors
by remembering his sacred covenant—
73 the covenant he swore with an oath
to our ancestor Abraham.
74 We have been rescued from our enemies
so we can serve God without fear,
75 in holiness and righteousness
for as long as we live.
76 “And you, my little son,
will be called the prophet of the Most High,
because you will prepare the way for the Lord.
77 You will tell his people how to find salvation
through forgiveness of their sins.
78 Because of God’s tender mercy,
the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us,*
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
and to guide us to the path of peace.”

1. Mary had sung a song of praise that also recognized how the Saviour would rescue and redeem his lost people (Luke 1:51-55)

Luke 1:51-55

51 His mighty arm has done tremendous things!
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.
52 He has brought down princes from their thrones
and exalted the humble.
53 He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away with empty hands.
54 He has helped his servant Israel

* Or *the Morning Light from Heaven is about to visit us.*

and remembered to be merciful.

⁵⁵ For he made this promise to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children forever.”

E. AFTER JESUS' BIRTH, MORE CLEAR STATEMENTS WERE MADE ABOUT JESUS' BEING OUR RESCUER AND SAVIOUR

Luke 2:25-32

The Prophecy of Simeon

²⁵ At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him ²⁶ and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, ²⁸ Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace,
as you have promised.

³⁰ I have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared for all people.

³² He is a light to reveal God to the nations,
and he is the glory of your people Israel!”

1. Jesus was the Messiah, the one sent to be God's saving of his people, the light who would reveal who God really is to all nations

F. IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS, ANNA MADE A SIMILAR STATEMENT

The Prophecy of Anna

³⁶ Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. ³⁷ Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four.*

* Or She had been a widow for eighty-four years.

She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. ³⁸ She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. ⁴⁰ There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

G. JESUS CAME AS GOD WITH US, TO RESCUE US WHERE WE ARE, AS ONE OF US

V. JESUS' RESCUE ISN'T WHAT MOST EXPECT

A. IN LUKE 4 JESUS WAS TEMPTED, BUT RESISTED BECOMING A LEADER WHO USED POWER IN A VERY HUMAN WAY

1. Instead he led, and became our light, our hope, our rescuing Saviour through humble, gracious love and self-sacrifice
2. He healed, not of his own power, not because people deserved it, but through the Father and the Holy Spirit
3. He was God in human form, living and revealing God's unconditional love for each and every one of us
4. Loving and seeking to be part of our lives, to help us by bringing us back into relationship with him

B. HE DEMONSTRATED THIS BY HELPING, RESCUING AND HEALING THOSE WHO DIDN'T MEASURE UP TO THE STANDARDS OF THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT

1. He made very clear that God heals any and all who allow him to
 - a) But those who looked at God as a distant, hard to please deity, and saw themselves as being right with him because of their national identity and right religious practices, refused his light and love
2. Gary Deddo has written two articles on this topic;

C. JESUS' ACCEPTANCE; GARY DEDDO

Jesus, like the Father, welcomes all people... Jesus' attitude and acts of receiving and welcoming call for a certain response to his self-giving. In essence, it calls for receiving what he offers. In contrast to that receptive response, there is the response of rejecting what Jesus offers, which means rejecting Jesus himself.

By Jesus drawing all people to himself he is looking for the response of reception. And as Jesus indicates, that response requires a certain attitude, a certain approach toward him.

Jesus thus announced to his disciples that in his presence the kingdom of God had drawn near. All of the kingdom's blessings are available in him. However, Jesus immediately indicated what response that truth and reality calls for: "Repent and believe in the good news" of the kingdom's arrival. A refusal to repent and put faith in Jesus and his kingdom amounts to a rejection of Jesus and the benefits of his kingdom.

A willingness to repent requires an attitude of humble receptivity. And that is what Jesus is looking for in extending his welcome, his acceptance. For it is only through humility that we are able to receive what Jesus has offered. And note that Jesus offers his gift before any such response is made. In fact, it is the offer of the gift that calls forth the response.

Repentance and belief are thus the responses of reception to what Jesus has already offered. Those responses are not behaviors or attitudes that pre-condition Jesus' offer, or determine to whom he makes the offer. Jesus' offer is for the sake of its reception—not for the sake of its rejection.

The receptive attitude Jesus is always looking for in response to his offer of himself is indicated in a variety of his sayings:

"For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost" ([Luke 19:10](#) NRSV).

"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick" ([Luke 5:31](#)). "Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" ([Mark 10:15](#)).

We must be like the soil that "receives the word" of the sower "with joy" ([Luke 8:13](#))

Receiving what Jesus offers, and so benefitting from what he gives, requires acknowledging that we are lost and need to be found, that we are ill and need a physician to heal us, that we come to Jesus to receive with empty hands, not hoping to make an exchange with him.

For like a child we do not presume to have anything that he needs. This is why Jesus indicates that it is the "poor in spirit" who are receiving the blessings of God and his kingdom, not those who regard themselves as spiritually rich ([Matthew 5:3](#)).⁵

1. As we saw last month;

⁵ Gary Deddo, Jesus' Acceptance, Jan 2014, GCI, <http://update.gci.org/2014/01/jesus-acceptance-part-1/>

D. JEUS DOESN'T ACCEPT US JUST AS WE ARE, AND JUST LEAVE US AS WE ARE

1. Jesus rescues us for a Reason, for a relationship
2. He doesn't rescue us, then set us down on our own somewhere and leave us to fend for ourselves again
3. He unites us with the Father through the Spirit
 - a) We are adopted into the life of God
 - b) We get to share in the relationship of Jesus and the Father
4. So Jesus' didn't just rescue people, he called on them to humbly follow him
 - a) To be disciples
 - b) To participate in his ongoing relationship with God

E. HE CALLS ON US TO BECOME PARTNERS IN GOD'S RESCUING OF MANKIND, AND ALL OF THE CREATION

1. To become fellow workers in his passionate quest to rescue everyone
2. And the central problem all need rescuing from is their living their lives without God
3. We are called to show the love and mercy of God
 - a) To show that he does care for them
4. He calls on us to live and share the good news that there is a better life available--a better future
 - a) Not only for this year, but for eternity

F. WHEN JESUS TALKED ABOUT PROCLAIMING GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR AND BROKENHEARTED, AND FREEDOM FOR THE CAPTIVES

1. He was quoting from Isaiah 61;
 - a) Which describes the future God has for everyone through Jesus, and through each one of us as Jesus' disciples, the Father's adopted children and instruments of the Holy Spirit
 - b) But it also describes the life of God we are to be participating in here on earth, today and tomorrow

Isaiah 61:1-6, 10-11

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ministers of our God.

You will feed on the treasures of the nations

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For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation

and draped me in a robe of righteousness.

I am like a bridegroom in his wedding suit

or a bride with her jewels.

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Everyone will praise him!

His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring,

with plants springing up everywhere.

VI. SO WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM ALL THIS?

A. WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THE TYPE OF “SAVIOUR” JESUS WAS, AND IS?

1. That God is love
2. That God is merciful
3. That God does care
4. That God wants to help us through our tough times
5. That his loving help and rescue is always available to us

B. AND THAT THAT HELP AND LOVE IS NOT DEPENDENT ON US:

1. It is all about who God is
2. It does not depend on us, how good or bad we are
3. God loves and helps us through Jesus and his Spirit because of his nature, his unconditional love and graciousness

4. And he has shown us his deep Fatherly mercy and desire to be with us and help us in our lives through the life of his Son Jesus
5. It is through Jesus that we have been loved and reconciled to the Father
 - a) And it is through Jesus we are led through our trials and tribulations
 - b) He as one of us, has lived through all that we need rescuing and healing from
 - c) He is still one of us, and sends his Spirit to continually be with us and encourage and comfort us as we suffer
 - (1) **Reminding us that we are never alone, even when we feel we are**
 - (2) **Even when physically, mentally or even spiritually we feel we are defeated, he is there reminding us that we are never defeated, not even in death**
6. And that we are called to participate in Jesus' ongoing healing, rescuing work here on earth, today

CONCLUSION:

VII. GWEN SMITH;

Jesus came upon the no-vacancy scene in Bethlehem to annihilate death – so that we, who are hopeless without Him, could experience love, forgiveness and freedom. Full life. Abundant life. Beauty-from-ashes life.

Childhood gave way to manhood, and at the age of thirty, Jesus Christ made his love mission known.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. 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.” Luke 4:14-21

The story of Christmas is the story of Jesus. The story of captives being set free, of the blind gaining sight and of our stains of rebellion being washed white in his blood. The story of Christmas is the story of life.

Today, as we move and meander in the mundane, I pray that you would join me in being gripped by a fresh and compelling awe for this perfect Love that breathes, bridges and brings beauty to our brokenness.⁶

A. PRAYER

⁶ Gwen Smith, A Love That Breathes, Bridges and Brings Beauty, <http://www.girlfriendsingod.com/2013/a-love-that-breathes-bridges-and-brings-beauty/>