

Our Christian Message

Luke 4:13-15 [King James] *“And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.”*

After His victory over Satan in the wilderness, Jesus Christ began His teaching of all who were meeting in the Jewish synagogues.

The record of one of these meetings in which Jesus spoke gives us insight into the message He was bringing.

This is the same message that all Christians should be bringing to humanity on every opportunity they have.

The context of this message had been prophesied by God’s servant Isaiah. [**Isaiah 61:1-3**]

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. And he stood up to read. 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 preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’ 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, and he began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’”*

The first thing we should notice is that it is impossible for any human being to even start this spiritual work without an active indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Also Jesus Christ had been “*anointed*” that is appointed by God the Father to fulfil this job of work. **Not every human being has been given the talent or the authority to take on a speaking assignment as Jesus Christ the Word of God had.**

Romans 12:3-21 [NIV] *“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

When we meditate on this list of “*gifts*” given by our Creator God we see that the vast majority are **silent gifts of personal example before those we meet on a day-to-day basis.**

“*Prophesying*” – the Greek word used is “*prōphēteia*” which refers to speaking under inspiration of the Holy Spirit **not** specific foretelling the future.

“*Teaching*” – the Greek word used is “*didaktōs*” meaning ability to communicate information, in this specific case the doctrines.

James 3:1-2 [NIV] “*Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.*”

We should add this to our consideration before we give a verbal witness!

If we are going to give a verbal witness we should be well aware of the limitations that are placed on this message.

Preaching was limited to “*Good News*” [**Luke 4:18**] and **not** our personal opinions.

Luke 12:13-15 [NIV] “*Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ Jesus replied, ‘Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?’ Then he said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’*”

Jesus Christ would **not** make such a judgement. He then redirected the crowd away from physical goods to the relationship we should seek with our Creator God. [**v16-31**]

Revelation 12:9, 11 [NIV] “*The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*” ... “*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.*”

The “*they*” refers to Christians and they overcame the deception of Satan by applying the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Good News, and their own living testimony, the way they conducted their lives.

Again we see a limitation on the message we give as a true Christian.

“*Poor*” [**Luke 4:16**] is the Greek word “*ptōchōs*” meaning a cringing beggar who is scared or frightened.

The Hebrew rendering of this scripture that Jesus Christ quoted uses the word “*ânâv*” which means lowly, humble or gentle in mind.

It is this status of human being who is at this time more receptive to this Good News.

Most of the followers of Jesus Christ were in this status in their physical lives.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 [NIV] “*Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things, and the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, so that no-one may boast before him.*”

Notice who were the vast majority in the early Christian Church.

“*Freedom for prisoners*” [**Luke 4:18**]

Romans 6:16-18 [NIV] *“Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey, whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.”*

This is part of the Good News, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ gives us a new start in life.

We are freed from slavery to sin, the old master that only leads to death [**Romans 6:23**] and serve now a new Master, Jesus Christ.

John 5:24 [NIV] *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

By accepting Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord we pass from death to eternal life, this is the freedom that is within the message we give to all humanity.

“Recover of sight for the blind” [**Luke 4:18**] –

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 [NIV] *“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”*

Satan, who is at this time allowed to rule in this world, with the consent the Great Creator God, so that humanity can experience, in each generation, just what it is like to rebel against their Creator God, as Satan did, and persuaded Adam and Eve to also rebel.

Ephesians 4:17-19 [NIV] *“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.”*

It is the constant seeking to satisfy the desires of the flesh that has caused this blindness.

Matthew 15:14 [NIV] *“Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”*

In Jesus Christ’s day on earth it was the religious leaders, scribes and Pharisees who were blind to the truth, the veil of Old Covenant teaching blinded them so they did **not** see Jesus Christ as the long awaited Messiah.

Both secular and spiritual leaders today are also blinded to the true gospel message.

“Release the oppressed” [**Luke 4:18**] The Greek word used is *“thrauō”* meaning crushed or broken by calamity.

Sin never leaves us un-scared whatever form it takes there is always a physical penalty.

Proverbs 23:29-35 [NIV] *“Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things. You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. ‘They hit me,’ you will say, ‘but I’m not hurt! They beat me, but I don’t feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?’”*

A very vivid description of the end result of the sin of uncontrolled drinking.

Proverbs are full of examples of the crushing outcome of sin.

Such oppression can **only** be released when the person is given a goal that is greater than the temporary pleasure that sinning can give.

“To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” [Luke 4:19] –

This is an allusion to the Jubilee Year, a time of new starts in life.

Leviticus 25:8-28 [NIV] *“Count off seven sabbaths of years, seven times seven years, so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields. In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property. If you sell land to one of your countrymen or buy any from him, do not take advantage of each other. You are to buy from your countryman on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee. And he is to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops. When the years are many, you are to increase the price, and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what he is really selling you is the number of crops. Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the LORD your God. Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety. You may ask, ‘What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?’ I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years. While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in. The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants. Throughout the country that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land. If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold. If, however, a man has no-one to redeem it for him but he himself prospers and acquires sufficient means to redeem it, he is to determine the value for the years since he sold it and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it; he can then go back to his own property. But if he does not acquire the means to repay him, what he sold will remain in the possession of the buyer until the Year of Jubilee. It will be returned in the Jubilee, and he can then go back to his property.”*

The whole economy of Israel was based on the ownership of land which could only pass on to those outside of the family, due to bankruptcy, until the jubilee year when it was returned to the original family for a new start.

An economy based on land ownership and agriculture is very stable, unlike an economy based on material goods only.

[Please download our articles under heading of ‘Agriculture’ for a fuller explanation of the above.]

Isaiah 49:8 [NIV] *“This is what the LORD says: ‘In the time of my favour I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassess its desolate inheritances,’”*

“Desolate inheritances” refers to the gentile world.

“Covenant for the people” that is the New Covenant made not only with Israel but all humanity, ratified by the sacrificial blood of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. [**2 Corinthians 6:1-2**]

Within the thought behind this last statement is the ministry of reconciliation that Jesus Christ started through His sacrifice and all Christians are called to continue as part of the message we bring to all people.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 [NIV] *“So from now on we regard no-one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

It is the work of the Holy Spirit in Christians to continue this reconciliation of God and all humanity.

John 16:7-8 [NIV] *“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:”*

This is the three steps we are to preach, so that the Holy Spirit does His work through us.

Convict people of their sin – without this knowledge people do **not** see the need of repentance and a Saviour [Jesus Christ].

Explain the true righteousness that comes from faith in what Jesus Christ has done for all humanity on the cross, not by our own works. [Please download and study our article ‘*Faith And Righteousness*’ listed under sub-heading ‘*Faith*’]

Remind people that they all face the final judgement of Jesus Christ. [2 Corinthians 5:10]

Jesus Christ did **not** refer to the final part of this prophecy given by Isaiah.

Isaiah 61:2 [NIV] *“to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,”*

“And the day of vengeance of our God” for as yet He had **not** qualified to be the Judge of all humanity and to direct the powerful correction that will come on all humanity as revealed to the apostle John by God and recorded in Revelation.

This message must be given as a complete *“package”* **not** just selective parts that may **not** sound too corrective.

This *“package”* is perfectly constructed to bring a person to the position of repentance, that is the starting point for any human becoming a created child of God.