

Luke Chapter 4 v 14 - 30

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- [0 : 00] The Lord Jesus Christ returned to Nazareth. We just read it in the scriptures. But he wasn't the same as when he left.
- Something amazing had occurred. Quite remarkable, quite outstanding. He'd left Nazareth and his carpenter's bench when, after all is said and done, he was a local joiner.
- He was the one that would get up on the roof to fix the rafters. He was the one who would be carving their tables and chairs, constructing them. He was their workman.
- And they would be used to going to him to have jobs done by him. So when he left, he was known in that village, quite a considerable village, some 4,000 or 5,000 people probably.
- He was known in that village as, by the older ones, the son of the carpenter. By the younger ones, the carpenter. But he went down, down the Jordan, to where John the Baptist was preaching and teaching and exercising a ministry of repentance, a baptism of repentance.
- [1 : 35] The Lord Jesus, around the age of 30, went down there. 30 was the age when priests began to function. And that surely is no coincidence.
- The great high priest, our Lord Jesus Christ, went down to the Jordan because he was going to begin his mission, his real work for God.
- He went into the Jordan. There was John baptizing people. And the Lord Jesus Christ waded in through the water up towards John.
- John saw him. And he was very reluctant. John was very reluctant to baptize the Lord Jesus. And for very good reason.
- When he says, you should be baptizing me, not me baptizing you. He was saying it with great respect because he already had lots of evidence that this man in front of him who was known as Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ of God, the Messiah, the Son of God.
- [2 : 59] Hadn't his mother spoken with Mary, the mother of Jesus. When Mary went to her, traveled some distance, to go visit her cousin and to tell her what had happened.
- She'd had an amazing visit by an angel and something amazing and unique had occurred in her body. She had conceived a child and never been near a man.
- the Holy Spirit of God had worked a miracle in her body. And this, you can just imagine for a young woman, this is really something not easy to cope with.
- Even though she knows it's from God and she's had the visit of an angel. she goes to her cousin to talk with her because Elizabeth's a godly woman.
- And you can see her turning to an older sister just to be able to share with her and to be able to have encouragement together. So John's mother had met the mother of Jesus before he was born.
- [4 : 19] And then there was John's father. John's father was a serving priest during the time of our Lord's birth. And he was given a visit and told that he was going to have a son.

Elizabeth was an older lady and past childbearing age. And normally that would just have been quite out of the question.

But God worked a miracle in her life. and Zachariah and Elizabeth were so thrilled in their older age that they were going to have a son.

So John the Baptist heard what his father experienced, no doubt heard many times what his dad had experienced in the temple and what Elizabeth had heard from Mary about the visit of the angel and what had happened to Mary.

And so there's all this information in his mind and heart when he sees Jesus coming in the water to be baptized. He said, no, this is all wrong.

[5 : 34] you should be baptizing me. And Jesus said something very clear and very distinct, permit now for thus it is fitting to fulfill all righteousness.

righteousness. But there's another problem. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

In other words, to signify sorrow towards God, to signify a confession of sin and a desire for forgiveness.

So repentance is a change of mind, a change of our thinking so that we begin to see ourselves as God sees us. And we're ever so sorry at what we see and realize and we apologize to God, we confess it to God, we want his forgiveness.

It's a baptism of repentance for the remission, for the removal, for forgiveness, for it to be done away with, for God to forgive us and put it right out of his mind.

[6 : 47] We know that God can't forget but he makes a promise that's just as good as forgetting. He said, I won't remember it anymore. I won't bring it back to mind. I'll never hold it against you again.

It's finished. It's as done as gone forever. a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins and here's Jesus.

And what we discover about the Lord Jesus Christ is that he isn't a sinner. The testimony that comes from the Bible over and over again through different people, God being behind them, the testimony is that this Jesus, this Son of God, has never been a sinner, will not be a sinner, is so sinless and must be so if he's going to do the work that God has entrusted to him.

He must be without sin. So he's coming into this water to be baptized by John for baptism of repentance for the remission of sin.

It doesn't make any sense. or does it? When sinners are baptized, what is the main meaning of it in Christian teaching?

[8 : 23] What is the main significance? There are many wonderful things said about it, being the conscience, a good conscience, the testimony of a good conscience.

there's a washing, a new life. But the main issue from which all the rest spring is union with Jesus Christ.

It's a way of God saying to us, do this. It's a symbol. It's just a symbol. power in itself.

It's a symbol of a spiritual work that's going to happen in your life. Repent, say you're sorry, believe in my son, be baptized, and you can, it's a symbol of you coming into union, and it's spiritually a wonderful, life-changing experience, a once-for-all experience, united with Jesus Christ, so that everything that Jesus did in his life, death, and resurrection is a benefit to all those who are united with him.

so we are baptized to signify our union with him. What he is doing, it's like getting into the water on the other side.

[9 : 57] He's the sinless savior coming into union with us. The sinless savior comes into union with us, and we, when we repent and believe and are baptized, are the sinners coming into union with him.

Permit now, for thus it is necessary to fulfill all righteousness. And a lovely explanation of what Jesus means about all righteousness is found in Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 8, and the first four verses.

But I'm not going to go down there tonight. It would take us a little off track, and, well, I guess you want to get home before midnight. So the Lord Jesus Christ comes into that relationship symbolized in his being baptized.

But something else happened that God told John would happen. I mentioned it this morning. When Jesus was baptized, as he came up out of the water, there was a dove-like image, dove-like form, which symbolized the Holy Spirit, the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

And that's when he became, Jesus became, the Christ of God. He was the Son of God, he was the promised one, but he was now the Christ.

[11 : 39] Peter speaks of this in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, God in Acts 2. God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ, Lord and Messiah, Lord and the Anointed One.

So when the Lord Jesus Christ has had that wonderful experience, also the Father was involved in it, wasn't he? He spoke from behind a cloud with those very precious words, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

So when our Lord Jesus Christ had been baptized, the Holy Spirit led him, into the wilderness. There he was to be tempted by Satan for 40 days and 40 nights.

Some years ago I was over in Kenya and I found it rather testing. The food was not quite what I'd been used to.

we were in the north of Kenya where Murph has a compound. It was some years ago when I first went there for the six week period and there the principal, the director of Murph had got a principal.

[13 : 21] He didn't want the men who came from southern Sudan and further east in Kenya who came for training, 50 or so of them at a time.

He didn't want the men to have food that they didn't have at home. He didn't want them to feel that they were getting something special that would make them really think, oh, I don't want to go home.

But on the other hand, he didn't want to give them it was so awful that they were glad to get home. And so he asked that, he arranged that the food that they have would be what they had at home, which is a good principle.

How many men have come over here to train for ministry and not wanted to go home? And they stayed on to the detriment of their own people.

So it was a good principle, except for people like me and my colleague from America. It was hard work. Beans and rice, beans and rice, beans and rice, and on Thursdays we had a change, rice and beans.

[14 : 34] And something as well that was called ogari, we used to call it ogali. It was like Play-Doh, like chunks of Play-Doh. I mustn't speak too disparagingly of food over there, but it was hard work.

and the conditions weren't all that wonderful and there were these little things that kept flying around, quite a lot of them, and they seemed to have a real enjoyment of a foreigner's food, the blood that they liked to extract.

For some reason it was great and I think they had some way of telling their colleagues that there was something new and really delicious on the menu, and so we were troubled by mosquitoes, and oh do they itch.

I was there for six weeks, 42 days, and I marked off the calendar day by day by day, and you know how it gave me time every day to think about the Lord Jesus in the wilderness.

It was just about the same period. Thinking about the Lord Jesus and what he was going through was a whole lot worse.

[15 : 58] He was starving, and he was tempted by Satan. Got through that wonderfully, wonderfully, and then he began his ministry.

He did a little bit of work around Judea, and then he travelled up north to Galilee. He started preaching around Galilee, and people liked him. They invited him to speak in the synagogues, and he taught the word of God.

And so we're told that he had been doing a circuit around Galilee, and been into Capernaum, and then he comes to his hometown. And the information must have gone, because there's no record in the scriptures that he had ever stood up and spoken in his own synagogue.

He'd gone there to worship. He'd gone there to study and listen, and my, it must have been a trial for him to sit and listen to some of the teachers. I dread him coming here, to not dare open our mouths if we walked in.

The great teacher, the all-wise one, and he would go to the synagogue, never complaining, go there and worship, be part of the congregation.

[17 : 15] But now he's come back, and they will have heard, the elders of the synagogue there would have heard that Jesus was going around preaching and teaching and healing. And so he was invited to speak in his home synagogue.

Understandable. They invite him to speak. And so they give him opportunity. They don't tell him what to speak. They say, what would you like to speak on? He said, please would you hand me the scroll of Isaiah 61.

containing Isaiah 61. And he opened the scroll, and he read, the spirit of the Lord is upon me.

We've heard it tonight from Luke's gospel chapter 4. The spirit of the Lord is upon me. And then he says what that involves.

He's going to preach to the poor. He's going to set at liberty those who are oppressed. He's going to heal the broken hearted. His ministry. He's declaring himself.

[18 : 22] He's showing the prophecy of Isaiah 61. And then he says to them, as he's read that section, today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

Why, that must have been staggering. He's really saying to them in their most dignified way, I'm the one who's been anointed according to the promise of God.

God, the spirit of the Lord is upon me. Jesus of Nazareth, your fellow countryman, your neighbor, has been anointed as Messiah.

The spirit of the Lord is upon me. God. And they were at first very impressed with the way in which he spoke and the way in which he handled the scriptures, very impressed.

But there were those who started thinking, well, look, this is the carpenter, this is the man who's done our joinery work. And they found difficulty in tying it up.

[19 : 55] They couldn't understand that the Messiah could be an ordinary person. And there was a great stirring up among the people in that synagogue where they reacted, wanting to hurt him.

And Nazareth is built, the village of Nazareth is built on a cliff edge side. On one end, there's a cliff, a dangerous cliff.

And they walked towards him and their intention evidently was to sort of, as it were, sort of go more and more towards him as a crowd in the hope that he would drop off the end of the cliff.

Such was their hostility. His own people. Where he'd been brought up, spent so many years, worked with them, known them, they were out to kill him.

But the Lord Jesus just walked through the midst of them and no one laid a hand upon him.

[21 : 09] God's so so our Lord Jesus Christ declares himself the subject of the prophecy of Isaiah 61.

There's also another prophecy about the Spirit in Isaiah chapter 11, where the promise is given that God would raise up, he would raise up a prophet.

Let's just turn to it. Oh, I haven't got your version. Could someone, would the brothers read from your version please? Mine's a little different. Isaiah chapter 11, verse 1 and 2.

Thank you. Thank you. sevenfold spirit. There you see them, seven. To show that he'd got the completion of the blessing of the Holy Spirit anon.

In the temptations Jesus had proved that he was going to be a real, as a real human being, he was going to live out his life as a real human being. He was going to serve God as a human being.

[22 : 23] He wasn't going to take advantage to the fact that he was God like the Father. He had the ability, he had the power to work miracles from the very earliest of days.

He's God like the Father and the Spirit. But he did not perform one miracle until he'd been anointed by the Holy Spirit in the Jordan at the age of 30.

Because he was determined to live out his life as a real man living among human beings. beings without taking advantage of his deity.

So he would suffer as a man. So he would live and serve as a man. And if he has no food, then he'll trust God to provide his food.

He won't turn stones into bread. He won't use his divine power. Now he's received the Holy Spirit's power. But he won't use it in a way that in any way contravenes God's will and purpose.

[23 : 38] But his first miracle, you know what his first miracle was? Once he'd received that anointing of the Holy Spirit, he was at a wedding. They ran out of wine, a rather embarrassing situation.

Sometimes weddings in those days, they went on for a week. We were at a wedding yesterday. Well, I don't say this with any disrespect to the people, but I'm so glad it didn't go on more than six hours.

That was a long time, but to have a wedding ceremony going on seven days, you'd be absolutely worn out. And you can understand that it was possible for the wine to run out, but it's embarrassing if you haven't provided sufficient.

And the mother of the Lord Jesus comes to him and says, they have no wine. And he replies, as it's recorded, and he hears, what is that to me, woman?

What is there between you and me? It's not being disrespectful. When we use the word woman, it's got a certain tang to it, hasn't it? It's not terribly complimentary.

[24 : 49] Well, in Greek, that is not anywhere part. There's no value judgment. In fact, it's quite a polite thing. It's the very word that Jesus used from the cross.

Woman, behold your son. And it depends how it's said where you get the intonation, you know, the manner in which you, woman, or woman. No?

Completely different. We don't have tone in the Bible. What a pity. So, Jesus is showing no disrespect towards his mum, but he's saying, what is there between you and me?

My time hasn't come. And yet, in spite of that, Mary says to the servants there, whatever he says, you do it.

Because she's a very strong inclination that Jesus is going to do, her son's going to do something about it. I don't know whether she had any idea what he was going to do.

[25 : 52] But there were six water jars with about 150 to 180 gallons in total. A mass, that's a huge amount of water for the ceremonies for the cleansing of the Jews.

And Jesus changed that water into best quality wine. Don't ask me if it was alcoholic, I have no clue.

That's what people often want to know. It just does not say. The man who was the master of ceremonies said, this is the best stuff.

you've kept the best till last. There's no wedding party on earth that could have consumed 550 liters of wine.

water water water What Jesus was doing was showing really what his ministry was going to be all about, what his whole life here on earth was all about. He was transforming water that was for the cleansing of the Jews.

[27 : 10] And there were six jars. And in the Bible six is an incomplete number because seven is the perfect number. Seven is complete. He had the seven false spirit and there were six enough.

The cleansing practices of the Jews symbolizing all the ceremonies and the sacrifices under the old covenant. All those instituted by God and what God is saying over and over again through his son there at that wedding they didn't work.

But what does blood what does wine symbolize but blood in the scriptures and that blood symbolizes the very life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He would lay down his life to really deal with sin to take responsibility for his people's sin to take responsibility as though he had done every foul action that you and I have ever done and all the others of God's people throughout the world and throughout the generations to take every wrong horrible rotten thought every wrong vile vicious word to take responsibility for it and in effect say to his father treat me father as though I was responsible as though I had done it all as though I had said it all as though I had thought it all treat me like that although I'm not responsible for any of it treat me as though I am and punish me with that collective punishment that they all deserve so that you and I and the

Holy Spirit can give them a completely free pardon because the penalty would have been paid and that's what Calvary is all about he came anointed with the Holy Spirit Messiah Christ he came to work miracles in proof Isaiah 35 is a prophecy about Messiah he would come and he would heal he would give sight to the blind he would give hearing to the deaf speech to the dumb walking ability to the lame he came to perform those miracles in the power of God it was God working through him God the Father working through him the Holy Spirit working through him the first comes from

[30 : 14] Acts chapter 2 verse 22 the next comes from Hebrews chapter 2 verse 4 where it is the Father working the miracles through him the Holy Spirit working the miracles through him he was being revealed the Messiah of God the Christ of God the Savior God God God but do you remember what John said when he introduced Jesus we had the reading this morning from John chapter 1 what did John say about Jesus when he introduced him and said behold look the Lamb of God who is taking away the sin of the world he said I baptize with water but he will baptize with the Holy Spirit I baptize with water he is going to do something far more wonderful he's going to baptize people with the

Holy Spirit he's going to anoint them with the Holy Spirit the anointer Messiah will anoint his people he'll pass on as it were the blessing to all who turn to him in repentance and faith to all who love him and will to serve him so we find in the scriptures that as our Lord Jesus became a servant to serve God to engage in his ministry for God so the Lord Jesus equips his people to serve and we benefit you can see it very definitely in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 you can see it in Ephesians 4 how God gives gifts to people and makes the church a body of people who are ministering serving the servant who is the

Messiah the one who says I haven't come to be served I've come to serve is equipped by the Holy Spirit to equip others also every believer in Jesus Christ has a ministry to perform I'm a bit uncomfortable about us calling any man in the church a minister I hope it doesn't distress anyone but I feel very very uncomfortable about it because every believer is a minister as far as the Bible is concerned if you want to identify a man you can call him a minister of the word because that's his true designation the man who gives his life the preaching and teaching is a minister of the word but there's also a minister of finance the one who looks after the books there's the minister of secretarial work there's the ministry of engaging with sisters in the

Lord and encouraging them and having prayer together and encouraging visiting and caring there's a whole range and a problem for a church in these days is that so many Christians aren't engaged in ministry they're passengers they're on the coattails of those who are really working for God this is the one who came into the world Jesus Christ the anointed one to engage in his ministry and he is determined to have a people following him who will be ministers so the challenge to every believer here tonight is what is your ministry what ministry are you performing for God a godly lady over in Wolverhampton where I served for 27 years said to me on one occasion she said

I'm so sorry Gareth that I just don't have the energy or the health to be able to do more than pray oh I said but isn't that the most important ministry isn't it the greatest need of the church to have those who are engaged in a ministry of prayer committed to it and zealous for it oh I thanked her she told me that she prayed for me all the years she'd known me every day isn't it going to be great to go to heaven to be in glory and after we've got used to the idea of being there which is probably like going to take a long long time we're going to be able to talk to each other and maybe we shall find out what we owe to brothers and sisters what each of us owe to those who have loved us and prayed for us and those who have spoken a word of encouragement to us and those who have spoken to us in the early days about the Lord

[35 : 51] Jesus Christ we discover what has been going on behind the scenes that we knew nothing about the ministry of prayer as long as God keeps our minds reasonably clear we can pray even if we can't do anything else we can pray and oh how powerful prayer is what's your ministry brother what's your ministry sister what's your contribution to the life of this church and the witness of this church what gifts have God given you personally that you're keeping to yourself and you're not making available to the people of God to the body of believers here in this place wouldn't it be wonderful if the deacons and the elders were inundated with volunteers so they don't have to struggle to find people to do the tasks that need to be done but they're inundated overwhelmed by the body of the church saying here am I send me here am I use me what can I do for the good of the work of

Jesus Christ in this place and from this place what can I do in order to further the gospel of Jesus Christ so that many many more people in this town will hear of our saviour the only saviour Jesus Christ here I am use me we're all ministers we're not lowering down the thought of a minister we're raising everybody else ministers together respecting loving each other and working together for one purpose the honour and glory of the one we love love love divine all loves excellengoooo love love love love love love love love love love love love love love love love love

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[41 : 43] Amen. Amen.

Amen.