

THE GOSPEL OF LIBERTY

Luke 4:16-30

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

So He [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, *"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."* So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

He said to them, *"You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.' "* Then He said, *"Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."*

So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

The theme could be said, of this bit of Scripture, to be the liberty that has been given to us in Christ Jesus but it can also be said that a major theme is that not everyone will accept and receive that LIBERTY that can only come through Christ Jesus. That is also a constant theme throughout the entirety of God's Word, the Bible as men and women throughout the ages, in given a choice as to live according to God's way or their own way, many choose to, in a manner

of speaking, be their own gods. Yet Jesus spelled it out for us didn't He? Jesus said, in response to the disciple Thomas asking Jesus, "how can we know the way?", Jesus replied, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6) In that Way then, in and through Christ Jesus, as He tells us in our passage of Scripture for today in the gospel of Luke 4:16-30, we find liberty and freedom for our souls.

Yet, what does that mean? That has been taken out of context throughout the subsequent generations after the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Yet the answer is before us as we will look at the context to Jesus proclaiming liberty to us through Him. In proper context to what that liberty or freedom truly is, and is meant to be for those who are children of God, those who have believed on and have received Christ Jesus, is spoken of throughout the Bible and then also the New Testament and many living testimonies are here today. In the book of Hebrews, we are told of some of the men and women of faith, in God, that hadn't received the promise of God in their lifetimes, that is in its fullness, "But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them." What that says to us is that no matter what circumstances came upon them, and as it is to be for us also, no matter what comes against us, we must put our unwavering trust in God-as ultimately, this is not our home, and our final resting place is not in the grave. Then also, our freedom or liberty is not determined by the will or ways of man but of God through Christ Jesus.

It becomes most apparent to us though, as anytime a passage of Scripture repeats a word or a phrase, that it is then being emphasized for us to take special notice of what is being said. Jesus mentions liberty twice within the same sentence. That passage of Scripture in **Luke 4:18-19**, is then in the Words of Christ Jesus, but He is quoting from **Isaiah 61:1-2**, and therefore, Jesus is confirming that it was a prophesy given to Isaiah the prophet to speak to God's people, and to then also have it written down for those of Jesus' day but also for us today. Jesus begins His quote of Isaiah saying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me...". Jesus of course is speaking of God Almighty, our Heavenly Father. That Scripture speaks of Jesus being the Messiah, or in Hebrew, Moshiah. That word Moshiah means Anointed One. The Greek for Anointed One is Christos, which we get the word Christ from. Christ Jesus (Moshiah or Messiah Jesus) was and is THE Anointed One to be the Great High Priest but to also be the perfect sacrifice for the sins of God's people. It's a wonderful thing to have knowledge but it is even better to have understanding which leads us in wisdom if we choose to walk in that knowledge and understanding. The writer(s) of Hebrews clarifies for us saying, "Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest [who

makes things right between us and God], who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer." (**Hebrews 8:1-3**)

So while Jesus was anointed as High Priest according to the New Covenant in Christ Jesus, that "something to offer" was Himself. Shedding His blood for the remission of our sins, taking the penalty of our sins upon Himself, to the grave, praise the Lord, and on the third day Christ Jesus rose from the grave, conquering death, sin, and all evil, making a way for us too, to overcome death, sin, and evil to have eternal life in Christ. To have LIBERTY IN CHRIST JESUS! **Romans 3:23** tells us that, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." **Romans 6:23** begins by saying, "For the wages of sin is death." But that is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. There's no liberty or freedom in knowing that we are all sinners and headed towards an eternal spiritual death, separated from the grace and goodness of God. Gospel means good news, right? The good news, of which we find that liberty and freedom, follows those two passages of Scripture. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified **freely** by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (**Romans 3:23-24**) That word "freely" is the Greek word "dorean" which means "gratuitously (graciously), without a cause, freely, for naught." Likewise, **Romans 6:23** gives us the bad news first, "For the wages of sin is death, but the **gift of God** is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Adding both those Scriptures together basically gives us **Ephesians 2:8-9**, "For by **grace** you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the **gift of God**, not of works, lest anyone should boast." The Anointed One to be God's High Priest then was also the sacrifice for our sins. Thank You Jesus!

As God is perfect in all of His Ways (**2 Samuel 22:31**) and His Works (**Deuteronomy 32:4**), which means He is perfect in love and grace and mercy but He is also perfect in justice and wrath. Then as we are a portion of God's works, His perfect solution to the sin problem was explained to us by Christ Himself, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**) Christ Jesus was and is the perfect and gracious gift from God to save us from our sins against God, to reconcile us to God to become children of God, to all those who believe on and then receive Christ Jesus. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (**John 1:12-13**) As

we believe on Christ Jesus being God's free gift of salvation, we receive His Spirit "as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come", as the Apostle Paul tells us. (**2 Corinthians 1:22**) But listen to what Paul says, in context to what he was getting at, "Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He **anointed us**, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." (**2 Corinthians 1:21-22**) That is FREEDOM in Christ Jesus! Our freedom, our liberty, does not come from the hand of man or of our earthly rulers, or leaders.

"[God,] has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and **upholding all things by the word of His power**, when He had by Himself **purged our sins**, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." (**Hebrews 1:2-4**) Our faith in Christ, and then in the gospel, or good news of Jesus Christ, is not just believing on Christ for dying on a cross for our sins and raising from the dead, conquering death, which is all true, for that is when we begin to live in the liberty that is in Christ Jesus. We believe on and receive Christ, that is, we are "born-again" as Jesus put it, by receiving the Holy Spirit, also referred to as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ as the Apostle Paul explained in **Romans 8:9**, "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you [that's the liberty that Jesus is referring to]. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." How can that be that the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God? Jesus Himself tells us what that means. "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." In context, "Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" (**John 14:22-23**) When Peter and the apostles were commanded by the high priest (not THE HIGH PRIEST) to stop preaching the doctrine of Christ, Peter proclaimed, "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior [Greek: sotare (deliverer)], to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the **Holy Spirit** [listen to this] **whom God has given to those who obey Him.**"

Wait a minute, Paul told us that we are just being saved by grace through faith. The apostle John said we are just believing and receiving Christ. After Paul said we are saved by grace through faith in Ephesians 2:8-9, he continues saying, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand

that we should walk in them." That needs for us to be willing to repent and turn from our sins that separated us from God in the first place right? The apostle John said, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." (**2 John 1:9**) That doctrine of Christ can be summed up in what Jesus said was the great commandment of God, to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and then the second commandment that is like it, to love our neighbors as ourselves. (**Mark 12:30-31**). Matthew's account of Jesus saying that has Jesus concluding, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (**Matthew 37:30**)

Yet we are not under the law in Christ right, we are saved by the grace of God? We are told from Scripture, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." (**Romans 8:1-2**) That sounds like liberty and freedom, in Christ, living according to His Way, His Truth, and in His life is our life! Yet none of us are perfect or have been perfected in Christ. That is why we are told, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (**1 John 1:9**)

Jesus is telling us, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (**2 Corinthians 3:17**) Our true freedom and liberty is of the Spirit, through Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord! Today is our day of salvation. Today is God's approved, or acceptable year of the Lord, as Christ Jesus upholds all things by the word of His power. That includes us! Praise the Lord! We as children of God have the anointing from God to share and show the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus. Yet in Christ alone can we find and receive liberty and freedom and healing and deliverance!