

Bible Study

APPOINTED AND ANOINTED FOR SERVICE

Study verses: Luke 4:18-19

There is something very beautiful about these words, and verses 16 and 17 introduce them to us. In Christ's time synagogues were scattered all over the Roman world wherever there were settlements of Jews. While the heart of the Temple service in Jerusalem was the offering of sacrifices, the heart of the synagogue service was the reading and explaining of the scriptures. Two portions would be read, one from the Law, one from the Prophets. A visiting rabbi had the privilege of reading the second portion and of giving an exposition. The congregation would be sitting on the floor and the rabbi would stand on a raised platform. When Jesus stood up to read He quoted a prophecy from Isaiah 61:1-2 which related to Himself; but it is significant to notice that he stopped short of the words "and the day of vengeance of our God". Why did He do this? Because He was now only fulfilling the prophecies which related to His first coming. The prophecies relating to His second coming would only be fulfilled at His second coming (Hebrews 9:26, 28). Notice the importance of the words in verse 21: it was as though Jesus said, "That which Isaiah wrote in prophecy I have come now to fulfil in history", because fulfilled prophecy becomes history. We shall look at the words of Jesus, so applicable to Himself and yet very applicable to those of us who believe on Him and who are His servants (Luke 4:18-19; John 14:12; John 20:21). Let us look at Him as we study these verses, also realising the commission that rests upon us.

1. Here is our Pattern for Service

In verse 18 the pronoun "me...me...me" occurs three times. What should a servant of the Lord be like, what should he do, and what should he say? The answer is here; here is our pattern in the glorious Person of our Lord Jesus (1 Peter 2:21). We are to be like Him in three respects:-

1. *We are to be like Him in what He WAS* – the Son of God (Romans 1:4); holy (Hebrews 7:26); but we, through faith in Him, become the sons of God (John 1:11-14); and we, through our union with Him, become partakers of His holiness (Hebrews 12:10).
2. *We are to be like Him in what He DID*. Which word describes our Lord's earthly ministry, in other words, what He did? – the answer is in Acts 10:38.
3. *We are to be like Him in what He SAID*. He only ever taught those things which were given to Him by the Father (John 8:28; John 14:10).

2. Here is our Programme for Service

It is outlined in verses 18-19, where we find the words "preach" and "proclaim". Jesus came to preach, and we are to preach (Mark 16:15, 20; 1 Corinthians 1:21). There is no substitute for

preaching! But what are we to preach? The answer is -- the gospel (verse 18); the good news -- not good advice, not what we must do to be saved, but what God in Christ has done for our salvation (2 Corinthians 5:19-21). We are to preach the gospel to those who desperately need it and whose need only the gospel can meet. Who are these people? In verse 18 five classes are mentioned, and only the gospel can meet their need:-

1. 1. *The BANKRUPT* -- -- "the poor" . The gospel is for rich and poor alike, but this reference is to the spiritually poor. It was to this kind of poverty that Jesus was referring in Matthew 5:3. The gospel meets us when we have nothing left, nothing to offer, when we are helpless and hopeless! -- Romans 5:6.
2. 2. *The BROKEN-HEARTED (KJV)*. Is there any remedy for a broken heart compared with the gospel, the good news of God's love in Christ, to help men and women who are bruised and broken, needing healing for their souls? He is the Great Physician!
3. 3. *The BOUND* -- -- "freedom for the prisoners" . Read about the woman in Luke 13:11-13, how that Jesus graciously "" put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up". This is what the Lord can do (John 8:36).
4. 4. *The BLIND* -- - "" recovery of sight for the blind"" . By nature we are all blinded by sin (2 Corinthians 4:4). Many people are blinded by religion, orthodoxy and prejudice. Only the Lord can open blind eyes (John 8:12).
5. 5. *The BRUISED* -- - "to release the oppressed". This has reference to people who have been the special objects of Satan's attack. They have been overwhelmed by his wicked efforts to batter, bruise and banish them, and upon them are the marks of sin and suffering. Thank God the gospel can bring relief and salvation!

3. Here is our Period for Service

This is indicated in verse 19 -- -- "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour". How long do we have to preach the gospel? -- only as long as the day of grace lasts (2 Corinthians 6:2); it refers to the period of time when men and women may come and be saved through faith in Jesus Christ (John 6:37; Revelation 22:17). It is a limited period, and when that time comes God's judgment will fall upon the ungodly (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). The day of judgment is not far away (John 9:4); compare James 5:8. Soon it will be too late to plead with sinners to come to Christ -- look up Luke 13:24-28.

4. Here is our Power for Service

The Lord Jesus, though He was the Son of God, had to wait for the anointing and empowering of the Holy Spirit to rest upon Him so that He could enter upon and fulfil His earthly ministry. He was able to say, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me..."; and only as we are so empowered can we serve the Lord effectively -- look up and compare Luke 3:22 and Acts 1:8.

