

Message Series: Preparing for the Savior.
Message 13: The Announcement of the Savior. Luke 4:16-21
Pastor Roger Ridley, Gretna Baptist Church – March 11, 2007

Although it is still two years away we are already heavy into the political campaigning of those that would like to become the next President of the United States. It has been interesting to see where the various candidates have chosen to make their official public announcement. John Edwards did so wearing blue jeans and with a shovel in hand down in New Orleans, John Cain did so while being interviewed on the David Letterman Show, and Barack Obama made his announcement in Springfield, Illinois. He chose a historic place to make, what some believe, was a historic announcement.

This morning, I want us to consider one of the greatest public announcements in the history of this world. In a small synagogue, in the village of Nazareth, Jesus made the public announcement that He was The Anointed One of God, the Messiah; the Savior everyone was looking for.

I want us to look back at that day, and see what made His announcement so significant. Look at Luke 4:16-21...

There are **several details** associated with His announcement that I want to bring to your attention:

I. The Occasion of His Announcement

Verse 16 informs us, “*And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up...*”

Jesus did not just show up in Nazareth one day to make His announcement. He came there following a series of significant events, which we have already considered.

There was His baptism in the waters of the Jordan, by John the Baptist. It was there that the heavens opened up, and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove, and rested upon Jesus. As we pointed out, that was His actual anointing with the Holy Spirit from God the Father. This was all confirmed with the very pronouncement of God, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.*”

Following that, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan for 40 days. During those 40 days, He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. His victory over the temptations of Satan was crucial to the announcement that He was now about to make.

Following the temptations, verses 14-15 summarize His activities before He showed up in Nazareth...

It is important to note the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Between His temptation, and His announcement in Nazareth, Jesus ministered in the power of the Spirit throughout Galilee, with the result that in a short period of time He had become well-known as a speaker and miracle-worker.

With those events, Jesus then came to Nazareth. That background proved that He was qualified to make the announcement that He was about to make. What He was about to say was bold, by anyone's standards, but it was not without proof. Jesus proved Himself first; then He came to Nazareth.

Nazareth was not the likely spot for such an announcement. There was nothing significant about the village neither in prophecy, nor in the time of Christ. That's why Nathaniel, when he heard about Jesus from his friends, asked, "*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth (John 1:46)?*" Well, Jesus was about to change that.

Verse 16 points out to us that this is where He had been brought up. This was the place He had lived for 30 years. These were the people that would have known Him the very best. These were the people that should have been the most supportive of the announcement that He would make. But as we shall see it only served to illustrate what John says in John 1:11, "*He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.*"

On this occasion, according to His custom, He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. That day, in that synagogue, in that insignificant village, history was about to be made.

II. The Scripture Used in His Announcement

Verse 17 tells us that He was handed the scroll of the book of Isaiah. This would have been a large scroll; it's one of the largest books of the Bible. We are told that Jesus actually looked for the passage that He would read. It was Isaiah 61:1-2. Here, verses 18-19 tell us what Jesus read...

This was a familiar and favorite passage in those days. People understood these verses to speak of the coming Messiah, the Anointed One of God. Reading it gave them hope, and they looked forward to its fulfillment. I am reminded of what Philip said to Nathaniel in John 1:45, "*We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write!*"

The passage chosen by Jesus to read was indeed very significant. People were aware of it, they knew what it was about, and they looked forward to its fulfillment. But nothing could have prepared them for what they were about to hear.

III. The Claim of His Announcement

Verse 20 tells us that after Jesus read the passage, He closed the scroll of the book, handed it back to the person in charge of it, and sat down. It kind of gives the impression that that was the end of it, but in fact, things were just getting started. We are told that the eyes of everyone there were fastened on Him. They wanted Jesus to speak. They looked forward to His comments on that passage; a passage known and loved by them all.

His message was brief, but profound! Verse 21, "*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*"

To picture the impact, imagine that after our scripture reading this morning, I said to you, "*You have just witnessed the fulfillment of this scripture.*" What would you think? Well, in just a moment we will see what they thought.

With His statement, what was Jesus claiming?

He was claiming to be the Anointed One of God. The Messiah that Moses and all the prophets had spoken of. He was the answer to their prayers. He was the answer to the longing of their hearts.

Isaiah 61:1-2 was just one passage of many throughout the Old Testament that spoke of the Messiah, and Jesus was saying that they all spoke of Him.

Remember what Jesus said to the two on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:25-27, *“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken... And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”*

This was the boldest of bold claims that Jesus was making. But, it was not without proof. The evidence was the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He was claiming, *“The Holy Spirit is upon Me, and I have been anointed by Him for the Messianic office.”*

As we mentioned last time, everything that Jesus would do in His ministry, would be in the power of the Spirit. This alone would prove to those who watched Him, and listened to Him that He was the Messiah. Repeatedly through His ministry, Jesus would say, *“Though ye believe not me, believe the works (John 10:38).”*

The work of the Holy Spirit, in the ministry of Christ, proved who He was. By the Spirit, here is what Jesus would do:

He would preach the gospel to the poor.
He would heal the broken-hearted.
He would preach deliverance to the captives.
He would recover sight to the blind.
He would set the bruised at liberty.
And, He would preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Jesus did all those things, and it was all accomplished in the ministry of Christ by the power of the Spirit.

IV. The Opportunity of His Announcement

Obviously, such a claim as Jesus was making, forced a decision on those in the synagogue, and forces a decision on those of us who read it today. Either Jesus is who He claimed to be, or He is not. If He is who He claimed to be, then there is a tremendous opportunity available.

Some look at those different aspects of the ministry Christ was claiming, and think of Him as a social radical. They say He was politically motivated to empower the downtrodden. Others only see the physical benefits, and think of Him only as a miracle-worker.

But the opportunity Jesus was claiming to provide was actually much greater. He was offering freedom from the captivity of sin. The poor, the broken-hearted, the captives, the blind, and the bruised describe the devastating effect of sin in the lives of all people. Nothing is more real. Nothing makes us poorer, and broken-hearted, and blind, and bruised than the captivity of sin.

Jesus was saying that He had come, as the Anointed One, to set us free. The acceptable year of the Lord was a reference to the Old Testament Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:8-17). In that year, debts were canceled, and slaves were set free. It was a time of deliverance.

Jesus was saying, with Him, that time had come.

In fact, it continues today. The opportunity is still available for us to look to Jesus by faith and be set free. If you have never done so, will you do so today? Admit that you are a sinner. Believe that Jesus died for your sin. Call upon Jesus to be your Savior.

Of course, not everyone accepts the claim of Christ. That was certainly true of those who heard Him on that historic day in Nazareth. Verses 28-29 tell us...

Can you imagine, on the day of His big public announcement, the audience that should have supported Him the most, tried to kill Him.

That's what the claim of Christ does. That's what makes it such a historic announcement. It separates people. We only have two choices: either Jesus is who He said He was, or He is not.

If He is, then we should give our lives to Him.

If He is not, then we should be done with Him.

Which choice do you make today?