

➤ **Read Luke 4:16–30.**

1. How do the people of Galilee regard Jesus – teacher, miracle-worker, native son? (Lk. 2:52; 4:14–15)

2. Luke records that “on the Sabbath day [Jesus] went into the synagogue, as was his custom” (v. 16a).
a. Why is Jesus’ habit of observing the Sabbath so important? (Exod. 20:8–11; 31:12–13, 16–17; Lev. 23:3; * Is. 58:13–14)

Synagogue Worship

“The synagogue service consisted of prayers, readings from the law and prophets and a sermon. The leader of the service stood to pray and read, but sat to teach. Any competent person present could be invited to take part (*cf.* Acts 13:15). There was at this time a set list of readings for the ‘first lesson’ from the law, but there was probably freedom of choice in the ‘second lesson’ from the prophets.”¹

b. Why is the habit of corporate worship still so important today? (Acts 2:42–47; 1 Cor. 12:12–13, 27; Heb. 10:25)

3. Jesus seizes the opportunity to read and teach from the book of the prophet Isaiah (vv. 18–19).² The passage he reads prophesies about the Messiah, “the Anointed One [who]...tells how he is joyfully committed and equipped for the work of salvation....”³

a. For whom will the Lord’s Anointed One come? (v. 18)

b. What will he do for them? (v. 18)

- c. What is the “good news” (v. 18) the Messiah will bring? (Is. 40:9–11; 51:4–5; 52:7–10; Jn. 3:16–17)

The Year of the Lord's Favor

The full text of Isaiah 61:1–2 which Jesus quotes in the synagogue in Nazareth reads:

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,”

When Jesus applies these verses to himself (Lk. 4:18–21), he stops after the words “to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor” (v. 19), because this gracious proclamation was the purpose of his incarnation. Jesus' first coming inaugurated the “year” of God's favor, an extended time when salvation would be made available to all people. Jesus' second coming will inaugurate the “day” of God's vengeance, a short period of time when God will bring his final judgment and destroy his enemies.

4. Skim Leviticus 25. “[T]he year of the Lord's favor” (v. 19) hearkens back to the Old Testament Year of Jubilee, during which God required the nation of Israel to rest from its labors and trust in his provision. Every fiftieth year debts were to be completely forgiven, slaves set free, property redeemed, the poor assisted. Even the land itself was to be given rest. It meant liberty for all of Israel. A fresh start.
- a. What similarities do you see between the Year of Jubilee and “the year of the Lord's favor,” marked by the Messiah's job description in verse 18?

- b. How does Jesus demonstrate that “the year of the Lord's favor” is upon Israel? (Lk. 7:21–22)

- c. Why do Jesus' words so infuriate "the people in the synagogue" (v. 28) that their earlier praise of him now turns to murderous outrage (v. 29)?

"They love truth when it enlightens them, but hate truth when it accuses them."

St. Augustine

8. Why is the crowd unsuccessful in its wicked attempt to kill Jesus? (Jn. 7:30)
9. Jesus is rejected by his hometown and so leaves Nazareth for Capernaum, to continue the work of salvation God has anointed him to do, for "this is the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk. 4:19) for those whom the Anointed One will encounter there.

Remember and give thanks to God for these promises from Scripture as you have opportunities to share the good news in his name with those around you:

"This is what the Lord says:
'In the time of my favor I will
answer you,
and in the day of salvation I will
help you...'
Isaiah 49:11

"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."
2 Corinthians 6:2b

*📖 For further study

¹ D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, G. J. Wenham, eds. *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1994), 988.

² "The passage [Jesus read] was Isaiah 61:1-2, with the words 'to release the oppressed' taken from Isaiah 58:6. The variation from the usual wording may simply reflect the interpretive translation in use at that time." Frank E. Gaebelin, Gen. Ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version of the Holy Bible in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 8 (Matthew, Mark, Luke) (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 866.

³ J. A. Motyer. *Isaiah By the Day: A New Devotional Translation* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2014), 294.