

Text of a message delivered by Heather Ameye-Bevers at Windsor Park Baptist Church on Sunday 26th October 2025.
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Messiah Revealed with Power and Purpose

Luke 4:14-44

This week in our *King and Kingdom Come* series, we look at Luke 4:14-44. Luke shows us that Jesus is not only Saviour and King but the inaugurator of a new way of life—a Spirit-empowered Kingdom marked by love, justice, and freedom.

Today we continue with our series **King and Kingdom Come** focusing on the third gospel. It is a gospel I love so much so we named our son Luke meaning, “*bearer of light*”. Last time Grant covered Luke 3-4:13 as Jesus resisted the devil’s temptation in the desert and going right back into it today, we are reading from Luke 4:14-44, we start with verses 14 and 15:

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit. News about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

One of Luke’s key themes is the affirmation that Jesus is the Son of God, revealed through the consistent presence and miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. From chapter 1 there are the Spirit-inspired prophecies of Mary and Zechariah, to the prophetic recognition by Anna and Simeon at the temple in chapter 2. Then the Spirit descends on Jesus’ like a dove at his baptism — Luke repeatedly highlights God’s divine confirmation of Jesus. Early in chapter four, after Jesus overcomes temptation in the wilderness, he returns to Galilee ***in the power of the Spirit***. This is crucial: the Messiah anointed by the Spirit inaugurates God’s Kingdom not through human strength, but divine authority. It continues,

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He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: (4:16-17)

Imagine being in the synagogue that day. *Try and put yourself into the story.* There would have been a buzz around Jesus. They knew that he had taught in other synagogues all around Galilee and that people were amazed by him. So, the rabi hands him the scroll of Isaiah. From all of Isaiah Jesus chooses to read:

***“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”
Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (4:18-21)***

This is such a powerful moment. It would have been amazing to have been there. Everyone is aware something significant is going on here, but what does it mean? Jesus is proclaiming the start of his mission, and this is the declaration of his life’s purpose. He is here on earth to be the fulfilment of God’s promise made 700 years earlier in the book of Isaiah. ***“The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news”*** – the good news is that God’s Kingdom has come, here and now!

But what does he mean, ***“Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”***? For those in synagogue what Jesus had just read had layers and layers of meaning. Jesus read from two scriptures, **Isaiah 58:6** and **Isaiah 61:1-2**. What joins them together is the Greek word

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aphesis which means release or freedom. For those present they knew this statement goes back over fifteen hundred years to **Leviticus 25**:

In **Leviticus 25:10**, God commands:

“Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you...”

When God established the nation of Israel every tribe and family was given land. God said every 50th year was to be a year of **Jubilee**. This was a holy year, a year of *aphesis*, freedom! A year when you did not work the land, but everyone rested, and the land healed. If the family had got into hard times with famine or sickness that resulted in debt and they sold their land, or even worse, sold themselves and their children into slavery to pay debts, every 50 years God had ordained the land was to be returned to the original family. Every slave is to be set free. Every debt is cleared. The economic balance was restored as was their dignity and social standing. The rich could not get richer and continue to abuse the poor through their lack of power. It reminded the Jews that the land was God's not theirs. They were caretakers for Him. What an amazing God, what political system is this?

Yet even though God had commanded this, Israel never did it. The love of power and money meant they did not bring *aphesis*, freedom. So, the Jews of Jesus' day are waiting for the Messiah to bring this release now against the Romans.

As Jesus read Isaiah's prophecies, he is saying the Messiah you have been expecting is here and it's me.

The King has arrived.

And the Kingdom is for everyone.

So what? What does this mean for us sitting here today? In particular, I'm thinking about two young men I have got to know recently who have just become Christians. Everything is so new to them but this idea of Jesus as the king and our call to bring about God's Kingdom is core of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. What do they and all of us need to understand. *What is Jesus telling us the Kingdom life looks like?*

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It really does mean Jesus was revolutionary, but it wasn't a revolution of power or might but of love and servanthood. Jesus didn't give out wads of cash he didn't use the power of the sword or even politics to overthrow the Roman occupation, but the Kingdom of God **has** come. The revolution was slow and deep and profoundly affected the world in ways we don't even realise.

Recently, historian **Tom Holland**, at the time an atheist, wrote a remarkable book titled ***Dominion***. As he had been studying ancient civilizations like the Greeks and Romans, he was struck by how brutal and predatory they were. This led him to ask a profound question: **"Where do our modern moral instincts come from?"**

Why in Westernised societies do we believe every person has value? Why do we understand we should care for the poor, the disabled, the vulnerable, when throughout history, and in many cultures today, the weak are exploited rather than protected.

Here is the contrast...

Luke 4:18 Theme	Ancient Reality	Christian Reversal
Good news to the poor	The poor are used by the wealthy and powerful	The poor have value as they bear God's image
Freedom for prisoners	Prisoners are worthless and condemned to suffer.	Christ imprisoned himself, brings release
Sight for the blind	Physical & moral weakness is despised	My blindness is healed as I see God's truth
Set the oppressed free	Strength is the highest virtue, and the weak are oppressed	God dwells with the suffering

Holland's research, spanning over two millennia, revealed something surprising: many ideas we consider secular—**human rights, racial equality, feminism, compassion for the weak, even freedom of speech**—are deeply rooted in Christianity. These values didn't emerge from ancient empires or Enlightenment philosophy; they were shaped by the radical teachings of Jesus. The **Kingdom of God**, as revealed through the gospel, redefines what

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goodness and justice truly mean. It's a Kingdom where power is found in humility, and greatness is measured by service.

Jesus, by worldly standards, was a nobody—no political influence, no army, no wealth. Yet through the power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of God, he brought about the most profound and lasting transformation in human history. His message continues to shape the world today and he does it through you and me.

I want those new Christian young men and all of us to know:

The Kingdom *has* come, and it's personal and it's for everyone. It has come on a spiritual level as we surrender to Jesus' kingship over our lives. It's also come on a physical level for us to bring about in this world. This Kingdom is for all of us, spiritually, because we know that we are poor with nothing to give God. We know that we are prisoners to sin, and we need to receive Jesus' forgiveness. We know that we are oppressed by the lies of this world, and we need to receive His truth and freedom. We know that we are blind to the things of the Spirit and need to receive his sight. This Kingdom has transformed us spiritually to be a new creation by the redeeming power of the cross and resurrection of Jesus. So the Kingdom has come in me but also...

The Kingdom *is* coming.... Now I am new God calls me to make His world renewed. The task Jesus asks of all his disciples then and now is to bring about His Kingdom by serving His world through acts of radical love to the least. Jesus said in **Matthew 25** **"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you visited me".**
Then the righteous will answer him "Lord, when did we see you...?"

The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:35-37, 40)

The Kingdom of God is where you and I take it. It's not bound by geography but by acts of love and as we do these acts, we bring his Kingdom

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This scripture in **Luke 4:18-19** has spoken to me so powerfully and personally. I was 17 and just started as a leader in a youth group for non-Christians from our local high school. I thought all the young people in the youth group would admire me and hang off my every word. They didn't, they kind of ignored me. The guy in the group I thought was really cute didn't like me. He fancied my friend. So, I prayed to Jesus please lead me out of this uncomfortable space, maybe into the worship or the dance team but as I was complaining to Jesus, I read from **Luke 4:18-19**.

It was one of those moments where I knew God was speaking to me and it was life changing. *"Heather, the young people are poor, and they don't even know it, they are in prison to sin that holds them in hopelessness. Spiritually and emotionally, they're hurting, they are blind to me, and they need to see me. They are oppressed by this world's lies and need to know my freedom."*

That was God's very clear call to me to get involved in youth work. Not dependent on how my ego is being stroked but because I love God and He loves young people. He came to bring them spiritual freedom, and he was asking me to do it with Him as His hands and feet. I worked part time as a primary teacher so I could do youth work. The crazy thing is that I had less money, less trendy clothes and less overseas trips than my friends, but I had a deep sense of joy and purpose. I saw God do such precious things in young people's lives when they discovered they were loved by a living God. I was inviting others who knew nothing about the Kingdom of God, to come and see. Come and know Jesus and this freedom for yourself.

Straight after this declaration, Jesus continues his Spirit-filled mission in **Luke 4:31-44**. He rebukes a demon from a possessed man—the man is set free! With the power of the Holy Spirit, He rebukes a fever in a woman—she is healed! Jesus would heal the sick, he'd prophecy, he'd deliver people from demonic spirits, he'd stand up against political injustice and oppression. He would do these acts that demonstrated the Kingdom of God is breaking in. Just like Jesus, our *preaching* of the gospel must be accompanied by our *demonstration* of the gospel.

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Jesus went in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit. We have the same power at work in us that was poured out at Pentecost. We too are now filled with the Holy Spirit. We are not alone in bringing about his Kingdom.

The big question is, where is Jesus asking you to be his hands and feet? Who are your teens? Where can you be uncomfortable for the sake of those who need to know the love of the King and the freedom of the Kingdom?

The theologian N. T. Wright wrote in *Surprised by Hope*:

The point of the resurrection...is that what you do in the present — by painting, preaching, singing, sewing, praying, teaching, building hospitals, digging wells, campaigning for justice, writing poems, caring for the needy, loving your neighbour as yourself — will last into God's future. ... They are part of what we may call building for God's Kingdom.

Where is God showing you a need that you can respond to? Mother Teresa said, “*Do small things with great love.*” In the part of the world that God has called you to occupy, are you seeing where he wants to bring his love, his compassion, his freedom, his justice? Is it someone at work who is struggling? Do you have a family member that needs support? Is there a child whose parents are going through divorce, that needs a coach at Windsor’s **Power Up**? Is it being a Children’s church or youth leader and mentoring the next generation? Befriending someone homeless who lives on the street? Or a lonely neighbour who lives down your street? The Kingdom of God is coming within us and that must be worked out in the world around us.

Our Life Group has been doing the study *Practicing the Way*, we can’t recommend it enough. When you start the study, you do a spiritual health check. They ask you to rate yourself on very difficult questions like:

- *I actively pursue friendships with people from other backgrounds, socio-economic, ethnic, disability, education etc.*
- *I regularly pray for and practice hospitality with those far from God.*

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- *I engage in regular acts of service toward the poor with a goal of building relationships.*

We all found these questions really challenging because the answer was “nup!”. How do you answer those questions? Our worlds are so tidy. So easy. Where are the poor, the oppressed, the imprisoned in my world? Alan, my husband, asked a great question. “*Where can I build a relationship with the widow and the orphan?*” He felt that for him a great place to do that was in **Power Up**, supporting a mum or dad and a child struggling with divorce. And he loved it! In those situations, you think here I am giving but so often God uses those acts of service to do his deeper work in us!

Aidan said a couple of weeks ago that many Christians want the king, but they don’t want the Kingdom. It’s messy, chaotic, it takes time, it’s disruptive. It requires transformation of our hearts and our allowing our lives to be disrupted because really, it’s easy to say, “*I haven’t got time*”, but God’s given us enough time. Our prayer each day is, “*Lord where do you want me to serve you today?*” Then look for it.

The Kingdom has come, The Kingdom is coming, and... the Kingdom of God *will come in all its fullness* – Jesus will return and God’s intention to walk with us in a continual, loving relationship will be fulfilled. Heaven and earth will be renewed, and the crazy thing is that **it will look like a fulfilment of the year of Jubilee!** No longer poor, imprisoned, blind, oppressed because God has restored all things.

Luke 4 finishes here in verses, *At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, “I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.” And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea. (4:42-44)*

I love that in verse 42 *Jesus went out to a solitary place.* How did he know the will of his Father except by going and spending time with God. How do we know where or how to be about his Kingdom except that we have spent time with Him. Now it’s our turn to know the

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joy of being in his Kingdom and bringing about his Kingdom. A great spiritual practice to help this is *The Lord's Prayer* that Jesus gave his disciples, to regularly pray. We're going to stand and say this together with a heart to want to allow God's magnificent, yet upside-down Kingdom, to come on earth, in our lives and through our lives.

Matthew 6:9-13

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your Kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
as we also have forgiven those that sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the Kingdom the power and the glory, forever and ever,
Amen**

(Doxology abbreviated from 1 Chronicles 29:11)

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Reflecting on Sunday 19th October 2025: Last week Margaret showed us that God calls the Church to live as one united body in Christ—embracing cross-cultural relationships that reflect His inclusive Kingdom. How might embracing and engaging with people from different cultures deepen our understanding of what it truly means to be one in Christ?

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These questions help you think more about this message. We hope they might be a conduit for conversation and reflection, encouraging us to wrestle with how this message might practically work itself out in our lives.

- 1) Who are some people or organisations that make you think, “I love the way they bring about or represent the Kingdom of God!” Why is that?
- 2) The message reminded us that Jesus’ revolution was one of *love and servanthood*, not power or control. Where do you see opportunities to live that kind of “upside-down” Kingdom this week?
- 3) What holds me back from participating more fully in God’s Kingdom work—comfort, busyness, fear, or distraction?
- 4) **“Many want the King, but not the Kingdom.”** What does that statement mean to you, and how do we keep our lives open to the messy, costly work of the Kingdom?

If you’d like to chat with someone about your spiritual journey or anything else going on in your life, please contact us at care@windsorpark.org.nz; **we’re better together and no perfect people are allowed.**



Below are some further resources that may take the message further and deeper and enable you to explore other viewpoints on the same theme. We also encourage you to engage with the preacher if there are further questions you have or if you’d like clarification on anything. Email us here info@windsorpark.org.nz and we’ll direct your query to the appropriate person.

1. Jesus regularly withdrew to solitary places to be with the Father. How might time alone with God help you discern where and how He wants you to serve in your current season? You might enjoy this article called A Beginner’s Guide to Retreat:

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<https://www.thesabbathlife.com/blog/practices/a-beginners-guide-to-retreat>

2. Heather mentioned her Life Group had undertaken the Spiritual Health Reflection by Practicing the Way. You can give it a go here (prepare to be challenged!)

<https://www.practicingtheway.org/reflection>

3. At the heart of Jesus announcement in Luke 4 is this concept of the Jubilee. To take a deeper dive into what it means have a listen to this podcast from The Bible Project on Jubilee: The Radical Year of Release <https://bibleproject.com/podcasts/jubilee-radical-year-release/>