

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me to proclaim the year of God’s favor!”

Lesson 05 in the series: “Christmas Greetings”

I. When Jesus began his ministry, he greeted the people in his hometown with powerful teaching.

“He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ 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, and he began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’” Luke 4:16-21 (NIV)

Note: Jesus taught with great authority because he was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

“Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit’s power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region. He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.” Luke 4:14-15 (NLT)

“...the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law.” Matthew 7:28-29 (NLT)

Note: Jesus was reading from Isaiah 61, and was claiming to be the Messiah who could bring the Kingdom of God.

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the LORD’s favor has come, and with it, the day of God’s anger against their enemies.” Isaiah 61:1-2 (NLT)

Happy New Year! We are living in the time of God’s favor.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For he says, ‘In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.’ I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”

2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2 (NIV)

- We have **Good News** to proclaim to the poor. (Matthew: 5:3)
- Christ is still setting **captives** free. (John: 8:36)
- Christ is still mending **broken hearts**. (Matthew: 11:28-29)
- Christ is still opening the eyes of the **blind**. (John: 9:39)
- The Holy Spirit will empower **us** to proclaim Christ’s Good News with authority.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (NLT)

II. The people in Jesus’ hometown greeted him with skepticism and anger.

“How can this be?’ they asked. ‘Isn’t this Joseph’s son?’ Then he said, ‘You will undoubtedly quote me this proverb: “Physician, heal yourself”—meaning, “Do miracles here in your hometown like those you did in Capernaum.” But I tell you the truth, no prophet is accepted in his own hometown. Certainly there were many needy widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the heavens were closed for three and a half years, and a severe famine devastated the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them. He was sent instead to a foreigner—a widow of Zarephath in the land of Sidon. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one healed was Naaman, a Syrian.’ When they heard this, the people in the synagogue were furious. Jumping up, they mobbed him and forced him to the edge of the hill on which the town was built. They intended to push him over the cliff, but he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.” Luke 4:22b-30 (NLT)

Happy New Year! The Good News of Jesus is still going out to the whole world.

“This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God’s wonderful grace.” Colossians 1:6 (NLT)

Happy New Year! Though it may not always seem like it, God is infinitely stronger than evil and His plans will prevail.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.” John 1:5 (NLT)

“Why are the nations so angry? Why do they waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the LORD and against his anointed one... But the one who rules in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them.” Psalm 2:1-4 (NLT)

Happy New Year! Jesus is coming to take us home very soon!

“There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.” John 14:2-3 (NLT)

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