


The Year of the Lord's Favor

2026-01-11 - Luke 4:14-30

	<p>As the ministry of Jesus begins, he announces to a synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth that he is bringing the year of the Lord's favor as the Messiah. The people who hear his claim seek to kill him before the day is out. This week we are looking at the teaching of Jesus, the response of the people, and what we can learn about what the Lord's favor means for those who walk faithfully before him.</p>
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Well, good morning. It's good to see you all this morning. If you've got your Bibles, I want to invite you to open to Luke chapter 4, verses 14 through 30. This morning, we are moving in our series in Luke to the passage where Jesus declares at the beginning of his ministry the coming of the kingdom of God.

If you were here last week, we looked at how Jesus went in the wilderness and how for 40 days he overcame temptation of the devil. He never fell to sin. We saw that his heart was pure. He truly is the Son of God. He repelled the devil with the word of God three times in a row. Even when the devil misquoted the word, he repelled him with the word. And at the end of all of that, Jesus is ready to begin his ministry.

Today, as we look at the ministry of Jesus, we are going to see a key theme from the Old Testament that should inform how we read the Gospel of Luke, because as Jesus begins his ministry, He announces that he is bringing the Year of the Lord's favor, which is a time of thriving, that for all who believe in God and depend on the Lord, they will have it now and for all eternity.

Now, when I say thriving now, I wonder what you think of. Maybe you don't often think about thriving, but I promise you, your brain does. If you watch anything on TV, you're probably familiar with a million ads for medication. Right? And in every ad, there's the person that they struggle with something. They have the pill or the shot or the treatment, and all of the sudden their life is perfect. That is an advertisement of if you have this, you'll thrive.

The same can be said for all of the mental health things. Hey, if you get online counseling, you'll go from sad to happy. Weight loss, fitness, all of it is tied to the idea that if you just have this thing, you will thrive.

The reality of scripture is that the only way that we can truly thrive now and forever is by dependence on the Lord. And so today, as we open up to Luke chapter 4, we are going to look at how Jesus announces what it looks like to thrive in the kingdom.

How can we thrive in the Kingdom of God?

To that end, our goal is to answer the question, **How can we thrive in the kingdom of God?**

And I'm going to pray, and then we will jump in.

Father in heaven, we thank you. We thank you that you sent your Son, that he lived a perfect life. He died on the cross for our sins. He rose. He ascended to heaven where he reigns, and he is returning. We thank you that because of what he has done, we have freedom in your name. Because of the blood of Christ, we are no longer slaves to our sin if we believe. And we thank you, Lord, that because of your spirit, for all who believe it is because you have opened our eyes to the truth and we are no longer blind.

Lord, I pray your spirit would be moving in our midst now that you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear what your word has to say. And I pray you would speak to me and speak through me that these would be your words and not mine. We pray all of this in the holy name of Jesus. Amen.

So we're looking today at **How can we thrive in the kingdom of God.**

How can we thrive in the Kingdom of God?

Thriving depends on dependence

And the first thing we're going to see in this passage is that **Thriving depends on dependence.** And our modern world would say, no, it doesn't. Thriving is about being independent and secure. But what we will see in the Old Testament theme we're going to look at is that thriving comes from trusting fully in the Lord.

Then Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread throughout the entire vicinity. He was teaching in their synagogues, being praised by everyone.

Luke 4:14-15 CSB

When Jesus returns to Galilee after he's been tempted for 40 days in the wilderness, ***he returns in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread throughout the entire region. He was teaching in their synagogues and he was being praised by everyone.***

So everyone, as he starts to go synagogue by synagogue, they are excited.

Now, I need to explain what it means that he was going synagogue by synagogue. Because you might think he's like a traveling preacher going church to church. But in their day, there wouldn't have been like a church on different corners and different things. Each town in Galilee would have had one synagogue. And on the Sabbath day, all of the men of the town—and depending on which scholars you look at, maybe their families, but definitely the men—would have gathered together and they would have sat in the synagogue. And they would have had in a special place at the front, they would have had some scrolls. They wouldn't have had all the scrolls. They wouldn't have had the whole Old Testament at most synagogues.

Do you know how lucky we are to have the Word of God? Like you have it on your phone, you have it in your chairs, you have it on—like we have such a wealth of the Word of God at our hands, in our fingertips. And I just want to say that because when I read about the time Jesus was in, when he went to a synagogue, at many of the synagogues, they wouldn't have even had someone who regularly taught. They would have gathered together on the Sabbath day, which would have been Saturday, and when they gathered together, someone would have read, and if someone was qualified, they would have given a short lesson or discussion on it.

But otherwise, the people would have gathered at the synagogue on the Sabbath. They would have prayed on their own as they came in. And when they came in, they would have read a passage together, maybe discussed it, maybe a small teaching, and then they would have gone on their ways.

And here Jesus is going around the region and everyone would have been talking about this guy. He's teaching with authority. It is incredible. There would have been a wildfire about this. Everyone would have been excited.

He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. As usual, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written:

Luke 4:16-17 CSB

And we don't hear what he's teaching until **he comes to Nazareth where he had been brought up**. This is the town where they knew him from when he was a boy. We know from Luke 2 that everyone who saw him as he was growing up, they saw that they had favor for him. He was a very well-respected young man. **And now on the Sabbath day**, he's around the age of 30, maybe a little younger, and **he's coming into the synagogue**. And he would've told someone in the town in advance of this, "Hey, I'm gonna teach on the Sabbath." And they would've said, "Sure." The people would've known he was coming in to teach, and they would've gathered in the synagogue, excited for him to teach.

On the Sabbath day, when Jesus stood up to read, they would've said, "This is the guy we've heard so much about, and we know him. Let's hear what he has to say." And he opens the scroll of Isaiah that was given to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it is written.

And I'll wait to read what he read for a moment, because I just want you to imagine the drama of this. These scrolls would have been very large. And when he did it, I didn't do a bookmark of Isaiah 61, because I want to—it would have been much longer than, because I've got this down here. He would have been up there. He would have been looking. And of course, he knew exactly what he would say. But the people would have been like, oh, that's Isaiah. Where's he going to go? What's he going to read?

And he comes to Isaiah 61 and he says this:

*“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** release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free the oppressed,
and to **proclaim** the year of the Lord's favor.”*

(Isaiah 61:1–2, quoted in Luke 4:18–19)

Now, for the people of that day, when Jesus is speaking, they would have heard this and said, “He's talking about the Messiah.” They would have expected him after this to teach and say, “When the Messiah comes, here is what we will see.”

The good news for the poor—the people of Israel that time would have said, “All of us are poor because we are under Roman rule. All of us are enslaved by the Romans.” There's blind people here. We'll skip that one. Well, we'll talk about the oppressed because all of us are oppressed. All of them would have felt the weight of Roman rule as they waited on the Messiah to free them and put them back in worldly power.

That is what the people were waiting on in a Messiah. And when Jesus read these words, that's exactly where they would have gone. And it's the last line that we really need to focus on here. Because when Jesus announces that His ministry has begun, He announces it with the phrase, “**to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.**”

And this is a theme from the Old Testament tied to what is called the Year of Jubilee.

Now, I did a random survey of people throughout this week when I saw them, like at our prayer meeting on Wednesday night and different times where I said, “Hey, what do you know about the year of Jubilee?” And everyone was kinda like, “It's like this 50-year thing, right, where people get things back.” Are you guys aware of this? It's okay that you're not really aware of it a whole lot. For all of you, like, “Well, why don't I know about this?” But we have to go back to this to understand this passage well.

To understand what Jesus is saying here, we need to understand what the people heard when they hear **the year of the Lord's favor.**

Key Elements of the Year of Jubilee (and Sabbath Years)

A year of humanity ruling creation with relief from toil

No Sickness, disease, war, shame, debt, wild animals, famines, drought, natural disasters

A year enjoying what God has abundantly provided

Only occurs in a right relationship with God
Those with abundance blessing those who struggle

In Leviticus chapter 25, God promises the people that when they enter the Promised Land, He has a very specific plan for them, and if they will trust Him and depend on Him, He will provide for them in abundance.

The year of Jubilee was supposed to happen every 50 years, but preceding it would have been a cycle of seven years, seven times. Every seventh year, the people of Israel were told, don't grow crops.

Now, this is something that you may not think right to this, but they're told God's going to just whatever sprouts from the ground, eat it. And when you hear that, you should think, well, where else have we seen man eat what God provides from the ground that they didn't work for? Eden.

And God, in promising them the Sabbath year, "I will provide enough for you," is telling them, "I'm going to give you relief from the curse of Adam, one year every seven." It's beautiful imagery of restoration.

The promise for the people in Leviticus 25 and 26 is that if you take these promises seriously, there will be no sickness, there will be no disease, no war, shame, debt, wild animals, famines, droughts, natural disasters. If an army rises against you, I will chase them away. You will have your storehouses so full you have to give your food away.

The promise of each Sabbath year, and especially the year of Jubilee, was that the Lord would have the people in fellowship with Him, enjoying all that He has abundantly provided.

But to get to the year of Jubilee required seven times doing the Sabbath year. Do you know how many times Israel did the Sabbath year? Zero. Do you know how many times Israel had a year of Jubilee? Zero.

The reality is that the people never trusted and never truly depended on the Lord in the Promised Land. If they would have, there would have been no exile. Why this is so important for us to talk about is because when the people of Israel in Nazareth in this synagogue are sitting with Jesus, the storyline for the people of Israel is that because of the shame of our ancestors not trusting the Lord, the temple was destroyed and we're now under Roman rule. We were exiled 70 years.

By the way, 70 years of exile matches the 490 years they didn't do a Sabbath rest.

***"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** release to the captives***

*and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free the oppressed,
and to **proclaim** the year of the Lord's favor.”*

Luke 4:18–19 CSB

After the Exile when they returned nothing was ever the same again but what the people clung to in that time was a promise that when the Messiah comes he will preach good news to the poor he will release the captives he will give sight to the blind he will free the oppressed and he will **proclaim** the year of the Lord's favor. It will be a true and lasting Jubilee.

Now, it's important to know Jubilee is not just about the food and abundance, but the other side of this was that every Jubilee, the people of the land, if someone fell on hard times during the 49 years, what they were supposed to do is they would attach themselves to a household that was doing well. They would sell their land to that household, and that other household would take care of their land. And for those time, however much of the 49 years leading to the Jubilee, they would be in the debt of that person. But in the 50th year, God would return everything to each family as He intended.

The beauty of the Jubilee was a full release from debt, a full relief from the curse for a year, and it was a picture of how God, if His people depended on Him, would have anything and everything they truly needed, because God provided all of it.

It is a picture of Eden. It is a picture of Eden in the fallen world and it is a picture of how God intends to care for his people if they will trust in him. And it never happened. And so as the people are sitting in the synagogue hearing these words they are waiting on a Messiah who will bring it in truth. They are yearning for this. It is something they have never seen and they are waiting. And in a couple short verses, Jesus is going to say it is here and now.

How can we thrive in the Kingdom of God?

Thriving depends on dependence

What the people understood in this day and what I want to make sure we start with is when Jesus says the year of the Lord's favor, when we read this passage, **thriving depends on dependence on God**. The people of this day understood that well.

And as Jesus announces the year of the Lord's favor, as he announces the coming of the kingdom, as he speaks and reads this scroll, this is everything the people were waiting on, but they did not see it the right way, as we will see.

How can we thrive in the Kingdom of God?

Thriving depends on dependence

Thriving is not about present circumstances

Thriving depends on dependence, and that leads us to the second point we're going to look at, which is thriving is not about present circumstances.

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. He began by saying to them, “**Today** as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled.” They were all speaking well of him and were amazed by the gracious words that came from his mouth; yet they said, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?”

Luke 4:20-22 CSB

Because you see, *after Jesus says this, he rolls up the scroll*. He announces the year of Jubilee, *he rolls up the scroll, he gave it back to the attendant, he sat down*. And by the way, this is weird. This is weird, right? Because he sat down, you're thinking, well, no, he's standing and he's teaching. But in their day, after you read, you would sit down in the midst of the people to teach.

So when he sits down, every eye would have trained to him and they are waiting on him to teach and they're expecting him to talk about the future Messiah. And instead he says, “**Today**, in this moment, as you listen, *This Scripture has been fulfilled*.”

They were all speaking well of him. In fact, they were all speaking well of him. The languages they were testifying about how amazing he is. They're amazed by the gracious words that came from his mouth. And yet when he says, “**Today, as you listen, the Scripture has been fulfilled**,” they start to say to one another, “*Isn't this Joseph's son?*”

What? First and foremost, as he's saying this, we know it's Jesus. We know that he just was in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights. They don't know that. They think this is a kid who grew up in their town, who's now around 30, who's announcing that he's the Messiah. And you may think this was uncommon in that time, but about 25 years before Jesus would have said this, the Romans put down in a nearby town a rebellion and wiped out a city in Galilee because a guy said he was the Messiah.

The people of that day laughed at the idea of a Messiah coming in the way that Jesus is coming right now, because do you know what a Messiah would bring? Wealth and power and food to feed an army. Because do you know how the Romans kept people from rising up against them? No one ever had food. You couldn't feed your army against the Romans.

John chapter 6, when Jesus feeds the 5,000, they're ready to make him king. Because if he can feed 5,000 in a day, he can keep an army fed for a lifetime. They can withstand any siege.

And so the people, when Jesus says, this is the year of the Lord's favor, it's being fulfilled in your midst, the first thing they're thinking is, well, hold on, you said, *proclaim release of the captives*. We're still under Roman rule. You said, *Set free the oppressed*. You said, *Proclaim the year of the*

Lord's favor. You're saying **abundance**. You're saying all of these things, and yet, Jesus, the Roman garrison is like a mile or two away. They still rule us.

The people of this day would have been full of so much doubt in this moment, because they do not see spiritually. They are blind to the truth.

When Jesus says, I come to proclaim good news to the poor, He is not talking about those who are physically poor. He's talking about those who spiritually know they are poor. Those who know that they lack what they need to be righteous.

When Jesus talks about the good news that he's come to proclaim release to the captives, he's saying those who are captive to sin. Those who know they are enslaved. Those who know they are blind.

These are themes that the whole gospel of Luke will develop because Jesus, as he brings his kingdom, opens the eyes of all who cry out to him. The Apostle Paul famously, they fall like scales off his eyes. He was blind and then he was able to see. That theme in the New Testament as Jesus heals. The reality of this passage is as Jesus tells them this, the people are expecting worldly wealth and he is bringing something far greater.

How can we thrive in the Kingdom of God?

Thriving depends on dependence

Thriving is not about present circumstances

Thriving is not about present circumstances. We know this in Scripture when we look to the New Testament. You look at the Apostle Paul, We talked in the fall about Ephesians. Paul, who is in prison in Ephesians chapter 6. He is not praying for freedom. He's praying for boldness to preach the gospel. He is rejoicing in what the Lord has done. He is talking not about his enslavement. He's talking about how he is free and has life in the name of Jesus.

Thriving is not about present circumstances. It is about in whatever circumstance we are in, depending on the Lord, because He has given us all that we need. This is hard to believe. This is hard to believe in the moment when the bills are stacking up. This is hard to believe when the pressures of life are closing in.

I wonder in that day as people were listening to this, what they were thinking, because here he is saying this and they're thinking, well, if we call him the Messiah, the Romans are going to march over here and level our city. And yet he's saying these words. This is hard to believe today, just as it was hard to believe then.

But the examples we have throughout Scripture are that the early church, they were rejoicing. We have stories of the martyrs as they walked into the Colosseum, worshiping. Because they know the present circumstance they face does not match the reality of what Christ has done.

How can we thrive in the Kingdom of God?

Thriving depends on dependence

Thriving is not about present circumstances

Thriving is utterly rejected by the world

How can we thrive in the kingdom of God? Thriving is not about present circumstances. And this brings us to the last point as we look at their reaction because **thriving is utterly rejected by the world.**

“Isn't this Joseph's son?” “Isn't this Joseph's son?” they say.

Then he said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Doctor, heal yourself. What we’ve heard that took place in Capernaum, do here in your hometown also.’”

Luke 4:23 CSB

And then *he says to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to me:”* As they start to announce their doubt of him, notice they don't say, “Hold on, are you saying you're the Messiah?” They don't ask him any questions. That's a key theme in the Gospels—no one says, “Are you the Messiah?” In moments like this, instead, to each other, they say, “Look at this man. He's not. This is the son of Joseph. We know who he is.” By the way, it's confusing that they say “the son of Joseph” as if he couldn't be the Messiah, because Joseph is from the line of David. They should know that it's at least a possibility, but no, they reject it fully. *“Isn't this the son of Joseph?” And he responds, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Doctor, heal yourself.’ What we've heard that took place in Capernaum do here in your hometown also.”* This is a proverb that's talking about a prophet in their hometown.

He also said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. But I say to you, there were certainly **many widows in Israel** in Elijah’s days, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months while a great famine came over all the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them except **a widow at Zarephath in Sidon**. And in the prophet Elisha’s time, there were **many in Israel who had leprosy**, and yet not one of them was cleansed except **Naaman the Syrian.**”

Luke 4:24-27 CSB

He goes on to say it again. *“Truly, I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown.”* He says, Because I am in your midst, because you've known me, you think you know me, but I am far greater than what you see in front of you.

He goes on to say, *“But I tell you this, there were certainly many widows in Israel in Elijah's day when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, while a great famine came over the land.”*

Now, remember the year of Jubilee thing we talked about a little bit ago? There's a famine and drought.

Key Elements of the Year of Jubilee (and Sabbath Years)

A year of humanity ruling creation with relief from toil

No Sickness, disease, war, shame, debt, wild animals, famines, drought, natural disasters

A year enjoying what God has abundantly provided

Only occurs in a right relationship with God

Those with abundance blessing those who struggle

Jesus here is tying what he's saying very clearly to the year of Jubilee and the opposite.

He also said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. But I say to you, there were certainly **many widows in Israel** in Elijah's days, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months while a great famine came over all the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them except **a widow at Zarephath in Sidon**. And in the prophet Elisha's time, there were **many in Israel who had leprosy**, and yet not one of them was cleansed except **Naaman the Syrian**."

Luke 4:24-27 CSB

Because in Israel, during the time of Elijah and during the time of Elisha, as he talks about, these prophets that the people that Jesus is sitting in front of, they say Elijah's a prophet and Elisha's a prophet. When Jesus references this passage, he is saying to them, remember that the people in their day rejected them too. The people in their day did not depend on the Lord, so they had drought and famine.

Elijah did not go to a widow in Israel. He went to a widow outside, **a widow at Zarephath in Sidon**, which would have been a Gentile, a pagan. If you read 1 Kings 17, you see that Elijah does not go to the people of Israel. Instead, the Lord sends him elsewhere because the people were so unfaithful.

And the widow at Zarephath—there's the story—he raises her son to life and there's when they're out of food her she has just enough oil and just enough bread every day because God provides in abundance exactly what they need through that whole famine and drought.

And in the prophet Elisha's time there were many in Israel who had leprosy and—and if we understand Jubilee and Sabbath year, we know that the Israelites if they were faithful and dependent on the Lord there would have been no disease in their land. When Jesus says these words, he's saying, look how thoroughly they rejected the word of God, and you're doing it now in my midst.

"There were many in Israel who had leprosy, and yet not one of them was cleansed, except Naaman the Syrian."

The language here is abundantly tied to, just as they rejected in the old, you are rejecting now. You would hope at this moment the people would repent.

When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They got up, drove him out of town, and brought him to the edge of the hill that their town was built on, intending to hurl him over the cliff. But he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.

Luke 4:28-30 CSB

But **when they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They got up, they drove him out of town, and they brought him to the edge of a hill that their town was built on, intending to hurl him over the cliff.** And as we read these words, we need to read in these words that they are trying to stone him.

A mob could not legally execute capital punishment in Jewish Palestine; the crowd is thus unusually angry—especially to attempt this execution on the Sabbath (v. 16). Although Nazareth does not appear to have been built on a hill per se, like many ancient cities it was set in the hill country, with plenty of jagged rocks and cliffs nearby. Stoning began with throwing the criminal over a cliff, then hurling rocks nearly the sides of one's head on top of the victim. One aimed for the chest first, but at such a distance one's aim would not be particularly accurate.

IVP Bible Background Commentary; NT

This is in the Old Testament, if somebody said blasphemy, you would take them up and you would throw them down from a high enough space to where they wouldn't be able to move, and then as a community, you would take turns tossing stones on top of them until they died. This was a way for the community to enact punishment.

But what's ironic is that *a mob could not legally execute capital punishment in Jewish Palestine.* You know this already because they couldn't crucify Jesus without permission from the Romans. They were so enraged that they were ready to risk the Roman garrison coming and wiping out their village in order to do what they wanted to do, because he has called out their sin that they do not see that he is the Messiah.

When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They got up, drove him out of town, and brought him to the edge of the hill that their town was built on, intending to hurl him over the cliff. But he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.

Luke 4:28-30 CSB

And they go to throw him off the cliff. **But he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.**

And every time I read this, I just wonder—you know, because I, I don't know, I've wrestled and forced people like, come on, dude. Or like my son, you know, like if, if my son, if we were wrestling and just all of a sudden he walked away from me, I'd be like, get back over here. But, but no,

right? Like, like, and everyone there goes from, who is this son of Joseph, to now as he's walking away, I wonder what was going through their heads.

But I want to tell you what should be going through your head. Do you remember? The quote that Satan tried to use to tempt Jesus, the third quote, ***“He will give his angels orders concerning you to protect you. They will support you with their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”*** He misquotes to try and get Jesus to test God. But in the very next passage, we see fulfillment, because they were going to throw him down, and now God brings him out. Isn't that cool? It's just one of those moments in Scripture where you see how God brings about his design. Satan's misquote does not lead to Jesus not doing what God has promised and prophesied.

How can we thrive in the Kingdom of God?

Thriving depends on dependence

Thriving is not about present circumstances

Thriving is utterly rejected by the world

The reality, though, at the end of this is that they utterly reject Jesus. This is going to be a theme. Of course, it's going to be a theme because he's eventually nailed to the cross. But from the beginning of his ministry on, as he declares that he is the Messiah, and as he declares what he has come to do, we will see again and again and again that the people of this world and the values of this world say no. They do not want him. They want a king who will fight the Romans. They do not want the abundance he brings. They do not want eternal life. They want a comfortable life now.

They miss the entire point of what he has come to do. They say we are poor because we are under Roman rule. And he says, if you are poor in the eyes of God, I will make you rich with abundance with eternal life.

They say we are enslaved to our sin. And he says, if you put your faith in me, your present circumstance will never change.

And he says, if the world rejects you, that is a sign that you are following me well because if you are following the Lord we should not expect this world to treat us any different than they treated the Son of God.

As Jesus begins his ministry his announcement is about the thriving coming of the kingdom to a people who fully reject everything he says and I want to ask “What will you do?”

How can we thrive in the Kingdom of God?

Thriving depends on dependence

The King is your only source of true freedom

We talked first about [thriving depends on dependence](#), and I want to make sure as we come to the end, you know that the King is your only source of true freedom.

When Jesus announces this message as the Messiah for each and every person there, what mattered most is that they would realize that He is the fulfillment of everything that they have been waiting for. We have the luxury of knowing he died for our sins and he rose and he reigns and he's returning. And our freedom comes through him. There is no other source of freedom we can find. Jesus Christ is the only way. He is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through him.

Do you walk in dependence on him?

A lot of times, and there's this perverse reality that as I speak about the dependence we need to have on him, there are a lot of charlatans out there who seek to twist the gospel and make it Jesus and something else.

The prosperity gospel is one of the most twisted and wicked things in the world because what it says is if you follow Jesus, and if you give him, you will get back. It turns the gospel into a picture, not of dependence on him, but if I use my what I have, if I use my wallet, my checkbook, my phone app wallet thing, if I use whatever that is and I give enough, then I will get back in more. It's a self-proclaimed gospel. It is a works-based gospel. It is a man centered gospel.

People like Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, what they do is they turn the gospel into a self-help thing. And they enrich themselves. And do you know what? The world hates them just as much as the world hates the gospel, but the world likes them more than the world likes Christ. I think that's an important note.

When we talk about things like the prosperity gospel, it seeks to twist Jesus into something that we can control.

There's a perverse reality, and this isn't just the prosperity gospel. The Pentecostal movement, one of the biggest deceptions in the world is people say, if you have enough faith, you'll never get sick. And do you know how wrong that is? The apostle Paul prays to God repeatedly, "Lord, there is a thorn in my side, remove it." And God says, "My grace is sufficient in your weakness." And yet modern preachers say, you can be better than Paul. Just like they said in 1 and 2 Corinthians, we see examples of this.

The reality is, is that for following the gospel, you cannot expect in this life that everything will work out towards your end and that you will thrive in this life. But if you are depending on the Lord, you will thrive in truth.

Do not allow the gospel you follow to be about what you gain, but about what He has already done.

How can we thrive in the Kingdom of God?

Thriving depends on dependence

The King is your only source of true freedom

Thriving is not about present circumstances

The King has already given you everything you need

Thriving is utterly rejected by the world

The King and His Kingdom will never be controlled by this world

The next thing we need to talk about is that the King has already given you everything you need. Whether He answers your prayers with a “yes” or “no.” Christians I talk to sometimes say, “Well, God never answered my prayer.” And there is a firm reality that a lot of times He says “no.” And “no” is an answer. You don't like hearing that. No one likes hearing that. But “no” is an answer. And “no” does not change what He did on the cross for us. This is one of those realities that if we see what He has already done, we see He has given us far more than we ever could have asked or imagined.

This is why Paul, in prison, can rejoice. This is why, in the early church, as they were scattered and as they dealt with things, the early church was not a place of prosperity at all. And yet, for all who had things, they were selling what they had. The early church, as it was exploding in growth, was giving away everything it had to the poor and taking care of them. And God, in His abundance, kept providing for the people of the early church. If He hadn't provided, there wouldn't be a church today. God has continually kept His church going and provided for it.

If we see that the King has already given us everything we need, we need not fear what comes up in this world. We need not fear what happens in an election or what happens around the world. We can pray for those things, but we know that those things cannot change anything about our status before the King.

Our **thriving is not dependent on this world**, because if we follow Christ, we are no longer of this world as he is not of this world.

And this brings us to the last point, because the King and his kingdom will never be controlled by the world.

That image of them ready to throw him off a cliff and stone him and him just walking through their midst, that power was nailed to that cross. He could have stopped it at a moment, and yet he willingly died on the cross for our sins. Not because the world had power over him, not because Judas betrayed him, but because Christ chose to die for our sins.

The world has never and will never control God. Satan can try all he might, the kingdom of hell will never prevail against God and His kingdom.

I hope you know this. I hope as you go today, as you pray and as you think through how you are going to live this week, we talked last week about how we need the word to resist temptation. I want to encourage you to keep going back to what we talked about last week, to wield the word well in the face of the enemy.

And I want to remind you that in the midst of whatever you face, the clarity and the truth of the gospel stands strong and stands firm Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever. If you are a believer you need not fear anything because he has already given you everything.

Let's pray.

Father in heaven we thank you for this day Father, we thank you that when your son came, despite the rejection he faced, despite everything that he went through, he did it all for our sake.

We thank you, Lord, that we see again and again when we look in Scripture, your incredible power on display. And we thank you that we see it nowhere more clearly than your son's death and resurrection on the cross.

We thank you, Lord, that we can rest in the promises that we have, that you have given us. We thank you that we can have eternal life and have it in your name because of the work of your son.

And Father, we praise you for all that you have done. We pray all of this in your holy and precious name. Amen.



Digging Deeper – **The Year of the Lord's Favor** - Luke 4:14-30

1. What stood out to you from the sermon?

Read Luke 4:14-30

2. What stands out to you as you read through the passage?

Note: The following questions require an understanding of concepts from the Old Testament related to the Garden of Eden (Gen 2-3) and the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25-26). If you missed the sermon, the way these come together with the announcement Jesus makes in Luke 4 may be difficult to see. If people in your life group missed the sermon this week, please have someone who heard it explain what came up about these themes.

1. When Jesus announces to the people that they are witnessing the year of the Lord's favor, how do they respond?
2. When you picture prosperity according to this world, what comes to mind?
3. When you picture prosperity according to Scripture, what comes to mind?
4. When Jesus begins to teach after his announcement and the people's general confused response, what does he tell the people?
5. Why does Jesus focus on a widow and a Syrian during the times of Elijah and Elisha?
6. How does understanding the Year of Jubilee help us to understand what distinction Jesus is making and why the people are ready to kill him?
7. It seems evident from the response of the people preparing to stone Jesus that they fully reject his claims. Jesus is claiming that he is about to bring the Lord's favor upon the people. Think about what you know about what Jesus does in his ministry. What are ways that we see him bring about the Lord's favor throughout his ministry?
8. Think about what you know about the continued work of Jesus after his death and resurrection. What are ways that we experience the Lord's favor today?
9. Why is it easy to believe we lack in this life?
10. Do you believe that you have prosperity according to the principles of Scripture? Why or why not?
11. What would it look like for us to live our daily lives as if we have all that we need (the Lord's favor)? What would change if we truly walked in the truth of what God has given us and done for us?
12. Take some time to end in prayer by sharing prayer requests and praying for one another.