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Luke 4:1 - 4:30



Gospel of Luke - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg discusses Luke chapter 4 and the temptation of Jesus. He mentions how the Gospel writers may not always record events in chronological order but emphasize their significance. Gregg points out that the temptations of the flesh, such as the desire for food, drink, and sex, can become temptations towards wrongdoing. He also highlights how the devil quoted scripture to Jesus during the temptation to jump off the temple, but Jesus refused to test God's protection in such a way.

Transcript

Alright, let's turn to Luke chapter 4 and continue our study of the life of Jesus according to Luke. In this chapter we have some portions that are paralleled in both Matthew and Mark, and some that are not paralleled anywhere else that are unique to Luke. And therefore we're going to concentrate primarily on the distinctively Lukean material, as they call it.

But we will also have a few things to say about that which is paralleled in the other Gospels. Let's read verses 1-13 first of all. And in those days he ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, he was hungry.

And the devil said to him, If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread. Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. Then the devil, taking him up on a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said to him, All this authority I will give you, and their glory. For this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if you will worship before me, all will be yours.

And Jesus answered and said to him, Get behind me, Satan. For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only you shall serve. Then he brought him to Jerusalem, set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here.

For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep you. And in their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. And Jesus answered and said to him, It has been said, You shall not tempt the Lord your God.

Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. Now we covered this temptation when I went through Matthew, and there's many preaching points that preachers can make from this, and observations that can be made that don't need to be dwelt upon at this time. I've made these points elsewhere, but I will pass over them rather quickly in pointing out that there is a 40-day period where Jesus fasted.

His fast apparently involved not eating food, but did not necessarily involve not drinking water. He fasted for 40 days, and you can only go naturally without water for a very few days. But you can go a long time without food.

You can go 40 days and more without food. But you can't go more than three or four days without water and dying. Now some would say, Well, Jesus could, because He's God.

He could do whatever He wants to. But this is the whole point. He's tested as we are tested.

He's taken on the handicaps of humanity. He has not given supernatural assistance in His fast, else His fast is seemingly worthless. I mean, for me to fast 40 days from food would be a very difficult thing.

If He's going through this as God rather than as man, what's the problem? You know, why would He even get hungry? Obviously, His body is subject to the same limitations as our bodies are. Therefore, after 40 days, He's hungry. It is not said that He's thirsty, because He no doubt has been drinking at this time.

And the devil does not tempt Him to turn anything into water, but to turn stones into bread. So Jesus has gone without nourishing food, without any food, but probably has been drinking water, because men need that. If they're going to go in the desert for 40 days, they have to drink once in a while.

There are few exceptions. Moses, for example, seems to have gone without food or water for 40 days when he was on the mountain receiving the law. And when he went up to receive it a second time, he apparently ate no food and drank no water.

It specifically says that. But that is a case certainly of supernatural sustenance, because no human being can do that without a miracle. But Moses' life was full of miracles.

And there's no reason for Moses to take on human limitations. He was a human being merely. And so the real miracle was that God would do something supernatural like

sustain him without water.

But Jesus, the miracle is not that He could do supernatural things, but that He had limited Himself. He was God and took on the form of a man and our handicaps and our disabilities and our weaknesses. And therefore, I don't think that He was given supernatural assistance here.

Now, it says He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. This is stated also in Matthew and in Mark. Mark's reference to the temptation of Jesus is very brief, only about a verse.

It doesn't talk about the three specific temptations. Matthew's version does give all three, but strangely they're in a different order. Matthew and Luke both agree about the first temptation being this temptation to turn rocks into bread.

But Luke and Matthew have the second and the third temptation in reverse order. In Matthew, the second temptation is the temptation to jump off the pinnacle of the temple. And the third temptation is to worship Satan and to be given all the kingdoms of the world as his reward for that.

Those two are reversed in order in Luke. And it'd be very nice if I was smart enough to tell you why that is, because there must be a reason. But it totally eludes me.

I don't know what Luke is getting at by reversing them, or if it's Matthew that has reversed them, I don't know why he did so. My own intuitions, which are only trustworthy up to a very limited point, are that Matthew's order of temptations makes sense to me as the probable order, and that Luke, for some reason, has reversed the order. But one thing we can say, whichever order is the correct order of the temptations, we can see very clearly in a case like this that the gospel writers do not insist on giving the pericopes of Jesus' life in chronological order.

It's clear that Matthew, no doubt, knew the story of Jesus' temptation from the same sources that Luke did. And this is one story that Matthew could not have been a witness to. Some people say the story of the temptation of Jesus is the most sacred story in the Bible, because it's the only one that had to come from him.

Most of the stories in the gospels were witnessed by the disciples. But no one was there, except Jesus and the devil, when this was taking place. And so, knowledge of this story had to be from Christ's own report of it to his disciples at some point.

And certainly, since Christ is the source, they all would have had the same source of information, and the changing of the order must be deliberate for some stylistic purpose or whatever. But one thing we can see is, since the order is reversed between Matthew and Luke, that we must assume that the gospel writers were not insisting on a chronological order of the events they're recording. They're sometimes arranging things

topically or some other way.

In any case, there are three temptations, and they correspond to the three ways in which we are tempted. It says in Hebrews that Christ was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. And in 1 John 2, it seems to indicate that the three ways that we are tempted is through the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

So says John in 1 John 2, verses 15 through 17. He says, all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And those are the areas in which Eve was tempted.

In Genesis chapter 3, in verse 6, we read that when Eve saw that the fruit was good for food, that's the lust of the flesh, pleasing to the eyes, that's the lust of the eyes, and desires to make one wise, that's the pride. I want to be wiser than I am, I want to be smarter than I am. She was tempted in all those ways, and so she took it and she ate it.

And here, Eve was not even, you know, desperate for food. She wasn't fasting in a wilderness, she was in a garden full of food that she was able to eat. And yet, when she was tempted with the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, in a garden, without any real hunger, she succumbed.

Jesus is tempted in all the same ways in a wilderness, while he's starving, and he overcomes, and he resists temptation successfully. And that is what we see. I say there are these three areas of temptation.

I believe that the desire to turn rocks into bread, clearly, is the lust of the flesh. Now, lust of the flesh simply means the desires and appetites of the body. We might think of lust of the flesh primarily as sexual lust, because we have teaching against that in Scripture, and perhaps we think of the word lust, even in secular use, usually has a meaning of something purulent and sexual, but actually the word lust in the Bible just means desire.

So the desires of the flesh, or the desires of the body, would be desires for sex, but food, and sleep, and drink, and other things too that the body naturally requires. These are not all bad things, but they are all things that have to be governed by principle. It's not wrong to eat food, but it's wrong to do so if you're supposed to be fasting.

It's not wrong to have sex, but it's wrong to do it with the wrong person. It's not wrong to sleep, but it's wrong to be lazy when you should be working and you're sleeping all day. I mean, there's obviously times when each of these desires of the body have to be curtailed, have to be governed by principle, rather than just letting them vent and run free.

The lust of the flesh, therefore, is not a reference to evil things in particular, but simply those things that the body desires, which can become a temptation when they aren't right. When it's wrong to eat, when it's wrong to have sex, when it's wrong to sleep,

when it's wrong to do those things the body craves, when you need to stay awake because you're a sentry but your body is craving to go to sleep, when you crave food but you don't own any and the only way you can get some is stealing it. These are times when the desires of the body, innocent enough in themselves, become temptations to do what is wrong.

That's one area of temptation. Jesus was tempted. He was hungry.

He was starving. But the Father had led him to fast and had not yet told him when to stop. Now, you may know enough about the physiological effects of fasting, if you've studied it, you know that when you go on a long fast and you take no food into your body, the first three days are very difficult, usually, because your stomach is used to being filled and it's not being filled and it's complaining and grumbling and you've got this hunger gnawing at you.

After three days, the stomach and digestive system pretty much get used to the idea and they don't complain much anymore and you don't feel hunger after around the third day. It may be a little different for most people but most people say it's the third day. Hunger goes away, although weakness is there because there's no calories being added to the body and the body is burning them.

So, after the third day, usually a person fasting feels very weak for another week or so. After about the 10th day, even the weakness goes away. And for everyone I've talked to who's fasted for 40 days or thereabouts says, after about the 10th day, the weakness is gone, the hunger is gone and you feel great.

You don't even hardly know you're fasting anymore. And that goes on until approximately the 40th day. So, from about the 10th day to the 40th, you've got about a month where you're feeling great.

Some people say they can do more push-ups during those days than they could when they're eating. They're full of energy. They feel great.

But the hunger eventually returns. During those days before the hunger returns, your body is consuming everything that could be regarded as food. You know, all that stuff built up in your intestines and all that stuff that's there all the time, it all gets consumed.

You get totally cleaned out. But when you've consumed everything that would be called food, then the body has to consume something else, itself. There's nothing left to consume but itself.

It begins to cannibalize itself. And your hunger returns because you're starving. The hunger, after it has gone away, after the third or fourth day of the fast, does not return until around the 40th day.

But when it does, you've got to eat or die. And so when it says he had fasted for days and he was hungry, it specifically means he had reached that point where eating was not optional. He had to eat or die.

And at that time, the devil comes to him and says, Why don't you turn these stones into bread? Well, what's wrong with doing that? Why would that be a sin? Well, it wouldn't under normal circumstances. Some people think that it would be a sin because he's not supposed to use his supernatural powers for his own needs. Most commentators say, you know, Jesus' supernatural powers were for the blessing of others, not for his own appetites, not for himself, not for his own needs.

And therefore, the temptation was to use his supernatural powers for himself. Well, I don't see it that way myself. Actually, when Peter was told to go out and catch a fish and get a coin out of his mouth, it was to pay for Jesus' taxes as well as Peter's.

So there's really apparently nothing wrong with Jesus using miracles to meet his needs if that's what the Father wants. But that's precisely the issue. Jesus said, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

That is, God is the one who has told me to fast. It will have to be God who tells me when to stop fasting. I am not going to live by bread alone.

I'm going to live by what my Father says. And he has not said what you're saying. You're saying for me to turn these rocks into bread.

And frankly, I'm very tempted to do so. But that's not what the principle is that I go on. That's not how I roll.

I'm waiting for a word from my Father because I'm not going to live just by bread, but by every word of God. In other places, Jesus said similar things like in the fourth chapter of John when the disciples went into town to get food for Jesus. And they came back and offered him food.

He said, I have food you don't know about in John 4, 34. And they said, What? Did someone bring him some food while we're gone? He says, My food is to do the will of my Father who sent me and to finish his work. You know, spiritually speaking, he'd rather do the will of his Father than eat food.

And he had some business to perform in ministry there at the well in Samaria. And so he just declined the meal. He had food of another sort.

In John chapter 6, when those that he had fed the day before came back for more, in John 6, 27, Jesus said, Do not seek the food, do not labor for the food that perishes, but labor for the food that endures to eternal life. So there are some things more important than food. It's even better to starve to death if necessary in order to be obedient to God.

For example, if there's only a little bit of food in a starving community of people, for you to go without food is a self-sacrificial thing even if you die. I had a friend whose great uncle or someone like that was part of the Donner Party. The Donner Party is that group that got trapped in the mountains around Reno, Nevada, and died of starvation, but not before they cannibalized each other.

That is, they ate some of those who died first. Well, this friend's relative was the first to surrender and say he would take no food. He'd let the others eat, and then he would be eaten by them.

And so he was one of the first eaten. But he allowed that to happen because he wanted to save their lives. Now, there's a person who puts self-sacrifice and doing what he would consider to be God's will above his own eating, even when he's going to die by not eating.

And Jesus, no doubt, would have done that too. He was about to starve. He knew it's time to eat, but God hadn't told him to eat yet, and he wasn't going to move until he got a word from the Father.

He's not living by bread. He's living by the words of God. Now, according to Matthew, the next temptation was about jumping off the temple.

And it's interesting because when that temptation came, the devil actually quoted Scripture to Jesus. It is written, he has given his angels charge over you to keep you, and in their hands they'll bear you up lest you dash your foot against a stone. The quote is from Psalm 91.

I think it's verse, isn't it, verse 11 and 12, I believe. The devil kind of leaves out something, but it's interesting that he, the devil has noticed that Jesus quotes Scripture. So the devil thinks, well, two can play that game.

I'll quote Scripture too. But the devil quotes Scripture out of context, and Jesus isn't fooled. You see, the Scripture actually says in Psalm 91, he has given his angels charge of you to keep you in all your ways, and in their hands they will bear you up lest you dash your foot against a stone.

The in all your ways is deliberately omitted. Look how it's rendered here in verses 10 and 11. The quotations are in italics in the New King James, and the devil quotes, he should give you his angels charge of you to keep you.

He leaves out the term in all your ways, and it says, and he quotes then the next part, in their hands they'll bear you up. He deliberately leaves out a phrase. Why? Because God will keep you when you are in the way, when you're going in the way, presumably, that is the right way for you to go, the way that God has ordained for you to go.

He doesn't keep you in all the ways that you may choose that are rebellious, or that are wrong, but in the ways that God has given you to go. God has foreordained good works that you should walk in, Paul says in Ephesians 2.10. And if you walk in his way, his angels are there to make sure that you're secure and safe in walking in that way that he's ordained for you. It's your way that he has ordained.

The devil leaves out that part and just assumes that God's angels are going to protect you no matter what you do. Now, Jesus says, it is written, you shall not tempt the Lord your God, or in Luke it says, it has been said, you shall not tempt the Lord your God. These quotes, by the way, are all coming, when Jesus gives quotes, they're always from Deuteronomy.

The quote, you shall not tempt the Lord your God is from Deuteronomy 6.16. The previous quote was Deuteronomy 8.3. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. But what is tempting God? What does it mean to tempt God? Well, it must mean what he's talking about here. What's being suggested here? Jump off the temple.

Certainly that's safe if the angels will catch you. And doesn't the Bible say the angels will catch you? So, you should be able to do that, just jump right off. Now, that would be tempting God.

Why would that be tempting God? Tempting God doesn't mean living dangerously and trusting God. Because when I've told people about living by faith, some people have said, wasn't that tempting God? Well, no, it's not tempting God. When you're doing what God said to do, if you're obeying God and trusting him with the outcome, that's what you're supposed to do.

But God didn't tell Jesus to jump off the pinnacle of the temple. And for me to put myself in danger without God's instruction, and then say, God, save me from this supernaturally. There are supernatural ways you can come through for me.

I'm counting on you to do it, even though what I'm doing is not what you told me to do. It's like I'm calling the plays. I'm putting myself in God's position.

I'll decide what I'm going to do, and I'll call God to come and send his angels to fix it if I made a dumb mistake. No, God will keep you in all the ways that you're supposed to be walking. You do what he wants, his angels are available.

His protection is there, his provision. The idea is we have to be obedient to God, do his will for us, and then God can supernaturally do all he wants to protect or provide for us. But if we are making our own decisions about doing things that are stupid or dangerous, and then saying, well, it's okay, God will fix it, God will take care of it.

That's tempting God. That's testing God. That's not letting God be the decider of my actions.

He's just my errand boy that I snap my fingers to call to help me out of my own mistakes. That's not okay. That's apparently what Jesus referred to as tempting God.

The other temptation is, in verse 5, Now, some people say that proves that the devil really is giving the kingdoms of the world to whoever he wants to. Whereas the Bible says that God raises up kings and brings down kings. And yet Jesus didn't correct him on this, and therefore they say Jesus agreed that the devil is the one who does this stuff.

Well, what is it? Is it God or is it the devil that raises up kings and brings down kings? Well, I don't see a real conflict because I think that everything the devil does, he does by God's permission. And therefore, God decides who's going to rise to power and who's going to be brought down. But the devil is the one who's the immediate cause.

The devil's the one who is the one manipulating things with God's leave. If God doesn't give him leave, it's not going to happen. Remember, there's this talk about the man of sin coming to power in 2 Thessalonians 2, but it's not happening.

Why? Well, there's something hindering him. Well, what could possibly hinder the devil from raising up a man of sin if he wanted to? Well, there's powers higher than the devil. When that is taken out of the way, presumably by God, then the man of sin will rise, the devil's own man.

So, we see the devil is involved in raising up rulers, but he's not the sovereign. He can only do in so much as God does. So, in a sense, God raises up rulers and brings them down.

But it is at one level true that the devil does bring his men to power, at least when God doesn't forbid it, when God allows it. Now, he's offering to give these to Jesus, and Jesus doesn't take the bait. In fact, Jesus, in this case, says, get behind me, Satan.

I think, if I'm not mistaken, Matthew has him saying, be gone, Satan. Or maybe that's another translation of this particular. Maybe, does the King James of this say, be gone, Satan? Get the hints.

Verse 8. Anyway, get the hints. Get behind me, Satan. Get behind me, King James says.

Okay, so it's the same verse, same version, but different translation. Okay. It seems like Jesus is sending him away.

And that's why I think it more likely that this is the third temptation, although Luke reports it second. Matthew reports it as the last one. And it does sound like it's when Jesus figures, okay, I'm done with you, Satan.

Get gone. Be gone. Get hints.

And Jesus said, because it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God, and him only

shall you serve. Again, from Deuteronomy 6.13. It's interesting that Jesus was in the wilderness right after his baptism being tempted, and he quotes verses from Deuteronomy. Because Jesus' life is sort of an antitype of Israel's history.

The gospel writers treat the life of Jesus as though Israel's history was a type of Christ. So that when Hosea says, out of Egypt I've called my son, meaning out of Egypt God called Israel, Matthew applies that to Jesus being called out of Egypt, because Israel's a type of Christ. Likewise, Paul said that Israel was baptized into Moses when they crossed the Red Sea.

And here Jesus is baptized, and then Israel was tempted for 40 years in the wilderness. Jesus was tempted 40 days in the wilderness. After they came out of Egypt through the Red Sea, after they were baptized, as it were, they spent 40 years being tested in the wilderness before they came into the Promised Land.

So Jesus, after he was baptized, spends 40 days being tempted in the wilderness. And all the quotes he gives are related to Israel's time in the wilderness. And so he's quoting from Deuteronomy as if his experience is sort of the antitype of what Deuteronomy applied to initially, which was Israel's wandering in the wilderness.

Now, a question is reasonably raised, what were the goings on here in these temptations? Did the devil actually transport Jesus to Jerusalem and have him literally standing at the pinnacle of the temple and wanting to jump? Did he really take him up on a high mountain where he could see all the kingdoms of the world? Obviously, you can't see all the kingdoms of the world from any high mountain. So my assumption is that this is a visionary experience. Satan is putting these things in his mind that Jesus was tempted as we are.

The devil has never physically transported me anywhere to tempt me, but he can put pictures in my mind of you could go here and do this and this and this. And for the devil to take him to Jerusalem could be something that the devil is doing in his mind. Putting in his mind the picture of you could go to Jerusalem, jump off this temple, the angels will, you know, everyone will admire you and so forth.

Or take him up on a mountain, either in a vision or literally, and give him a vision of the kingdoms of the world. Because you can't physically see them from any mountain. And certainly Luke knew that and so did Matthew, and yet they both record this.

I think the assumption here is that although we're reading of an encounter between Jesus and Satan, it may not have been a face-to-face encounter like we would picture it. To say the devil came to him and said can correspond to any of us saying the devil came to me and said. It doesn't mean I saw him.

It doesn't mean he and I were having a face-to-face conversation. The devil comes to us

and tempts us and says these things. How? He puts them in our mind.

If the devil came to us directly face-to-face, the temptation would be much more easy to resist, wouldn't it? I mean if the devil came to you and said I've got something for you to do, I'm the devil. You'd say, well, I don't think your intentions are good. I think I'll ignore what you want me to do.

It'd be a lot easier to ignore temptation if we knew it was the devil. As soon as you do know it's the devil, it's a lot easier to say no. But what the devil really does is he puts the suggestions in your head where you think they're yours.

Or in the worst case, you think it's God. Some people actually hear voices in their head that they think are God and it's really the devil. The point is if the devil identifies himself unmistakably to you, your guard is going to be up because you're not on his side.

He's the enemy. You know he's there to hurt you. You know he's there to make you go wrong.

But your guard isn't up against yourself. You're used to thinking your own thoughts all the time and entertaining them. And so what the devil usually does is he puts temptations in our head.

Yes, it is the devil. He is coming to us. He is saying these things to us.

And so he did with Jesus. But in my opinion, he didn't come visibly and face off with Jesus. I don't think Jesus had the slightest interest in doing those things any more than you or I would if he saw the devil and immediately, you know, is the devil representing himself.

But if the devil is subtly putting things in Jesus' mind like he does in ours, tempting him, saying, you know, you could have all those kingdoms if you just come over to the devil's side because he controls this whole operation. Then it would be more, frankly, it would be more of a temptation. It would also be much more tempted in all manner as we are tempted because that's how we are tempted.

So I don't know if it's necessary to assume that Jesus literally went to Jerusalem physically or up on this high mountain and saw the kingdoms or simply that as he was out there in the wilderness thinking about things, these thoughts came to his mind. In his mind, he went to Jerusalem. In his mind, he was contemplating actually going and doing that.

And wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. No, the scripture says you should not tempt the Lord your God. And it does say in all the gospels that Jesus was 40 days in the wilderness.

That means he wasn't in Jerusalem during those 40 days. Physically, he was in the

wilderness being tested and fasting. But apparently, these temptations were probably mental.

Now, I don't have anything at stake in thinking that. If it turned out that he was physically removed to Jerusalem, so be it. I just don't know that we're required or expected to see it that way.

In any case, it says in verse 13, Now, when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. So temptations come and they go, but then they come back. The devil isn't after you every moment incessantly, but he'll come when he finds an opportune time.

That is when he thinks you're vulnerable at a time that he thinks you're in a position that he might get some advantage over you. So he did with Jesus also. Now, verse 14 says, Now, this is a generic summary of Jesus going throughout the villages of Galilee.

These verses don't focus on any particular incident, but this is what Jesus was doing during this period of time in the Galilean ministry, going about and preaching. And of course, he did other things besides teach, which we're going to read about some of the specifics. But the main thing here, I point out in verse 14, it says he returned in the power of the Spirit.

And it's interesting because he was filled with the Spirit when the Spirit came upon him, no doubt, when he was baptized. And then in chapter 4, verse 1, it says, Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. The Holy Spirit's involved here in everything Jesus is doing.

He's filled with the Spirit. He's led by the Spirit. Now he returns in the power of the Spirit.

Luke wants it to be very clear to us that Jesus was led by the Spirit. He was not doing his own thing. The Spirit of his Father was guiding him, filling him, and empowering him.

His powers that he operated in were the power of the Holy Spirit. And he even said so on one occasion. He said, if I'm casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

And so here it is in the power of the Spirit that Jesus came and did his ministry. And the thing of value for us is to realize that in the book of Acts, the apostles were filled with the same Spirit and did similar things in the power of the Spirit so that the Holy Spirit that was in Jesus, which enabled him to do the will of God for him, is the Spirit that's given to us that enables us to do, even supernaturally if necessary, the things God wants. In fact, I think there's a supernatural element to everything that we do, even if we're doing something that doesn't involve miracles.

Because I believe the leading of the Spirit is a supernatural thing. He puts it on your

heart to minister in a certain way. He gives you that ability to do so.

It may not be that you're healing a sick person or raising a dead person or stopping the wind in the waves. You may not be doing something that's clearly miraculous, but that doesn't mean it's not God doing something through you that's spiritual that impacts other people in a spiritual way. My own belief about the gifts of the Spirit is that many of them resemble the activities that even a non-Christian can do.

The gift of giving, the gift of help, service, the gift of leadership, even teaching. A man who's not a Christian can be an excellent teacher. That's not the spiritual gift of teaching because that person doesn't even have the Holy Spirit, much less the spiritual gifts.

But a spiritual gifting in these areas means that in addition to these things which you're doing, there's another layer of something going on that the Spirit of God is using that to minister spiritual life, to others. I believe there are people who certainly could teach a lot better than I can. In universities, there are skilled teachers that don't even know God.

But though they're skilled, they couldn't possibly impart spiritual life through their teaching because they don't have the Holy Spirit. But a gift of teaching that is a gift of the Spirit, it may not be that the speaker is all that articulate. And I've listened to preachers and teachers that were not very articulate at all and yet spiritual life, I walked away with something spiritual that I received through the Holy Spirit, through their teaching.

And likewise, in giving and helps and any other service that you do that you're gifted to do, spiritually people are blessed through it. There's a man in our church named Steve Shaw who's really just a blessing to me. He's got a wonderful heart and he serves the church.

He's like a groundskeeper. I don't know that he'd ever be able to teach a Bible study. I've never heard him try, but that's not probably his gifting.

But I think he has a real gift of servanthood. And there's just something about him that blesses your heart when you're around him. There's just kind of a spiritual layer over what he's doing.

And he's not even mindful of it. He's just serving God. He's just mowing the lawn, opening the bathroom doors for people, stuff like that.

He's just doing ordinary stuff, but I don't know how anyone could be around him without getting spiritually edified. That's a gifting, a gift of serving, where anyone could do the things he's doing, but it wouldn't have the same spiritual impact. And that's what I believe the Holy Spirit does when we're filled with the Spirit and gives us gifting.

We do whatever God wants, and His Spirit causes a spiritual and even supernatural

impact on others through it. And that's how Jesus ministered. He was in the power of the Holy Spirit.

He apparently laid aside his own omnipotence, which he possessed before his Incarnation. As it says in Philippians 2, he existed in the form of God, but he emptied himself and took on himself the form of a servant. And he seemed to have emptied himself of his own powers and omnipotence in order to live as we do, through the power of the Holy Spirit, which he later gave to his church to be their life and their enablement.

So, he went around throughout Galilee. Now, here's an important chronological note. All the Synoptic Gospels, that's Matthew, Mark, and Luke, have Jesus beginning his Galilean ministry right after his temptation.

So, we have the temptation, and then immediately we have the Galilean ministry. In Mark 1, verse 14, it has just told of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, and then it says, now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee. Luke doesn't mention John being put into prison here, but he has mentioned it earlier, sort of anticipated it earlier, way back in chapter 3, verse 20.

But he doesn't make it connected to Jesus' Galilean ministry. Mark tells us that after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee. Matthew says, in Matthew 4, verse 12, he says, now when Jesus heard that John had been put into prison, he came to Galilee.

So, apparently the thing that got Jesus to go into Galilee at this point was John's imprisonment. However, John wasn't imprisoned immediately after Jesus was baptized, and immediately after the temptation. Because in John's gospel, which fills in some gaps that the others leave out, John picks up the story after the temptation of Jesus.

When Jesus, having come out of the wilderness from being tempted, comes back to where he was baptized, back to where John was. And John sees him and says, that's the Lamb of God. I baptized him.

I saw the Holy Spirit come down on him. I can testify that's the Son of God. Now, obviously John's talking about something that happened earlier.

He's talking about how he had previously baptized Jesus. John's gospel doesn't actually record the event of the baptism of Jesus. Only John's later testimony where John's talking about having baptized Jesus.

And this apparently happened after Jesus had been baptized and gone out in the wilderness and came back. And so we find in John's gospel that when Jesus came back from the temptation, there were four days in a row all recorded in John chapter 1, where John the Baptist and his disciples had some kind of statements or interaction with Jesus. And then in John chapter 2, Jesus turned water to wine and later cleansed the temple.

Then in chapter 3 of John, he had his conversation with Nicodemus. But John was not in prison yet in any of this. It says in John 3, 24, for John had not yet been thrown into prison.

Now that's an important chronological note. Because all of the other gospels pick up the story after the temptation of Jesus with the imprisonment of John. As soon as the temptation is related, it says when John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee.

But John tells us in John 3, 24, John was not yet put in prison for some time after that. There were things Jesus did before John was put in prison, but he didn't do them in Galilee for the most part. The water to wine was in a Galilean city, but he cleansed the temple in Jerusalem.

He met with Nicodemus in Jerusalem. He met with the woman at the well in Samaria. This is all before his Galilean ministry.

That is to say that between Luke 4, 13 and Luke 4, 14, between verses 13 and 14, the events of John chapters 1 through 4 fit in there. Because those events of John chapters 1 through 4 happened before John was put in prison. But we read that that whole thing is skipped over in all three synoptic gospels.

And they skip to the Galilean ministry, which is the focus of all those gospels, including Luke. And one particular case we read of here in Nazareth, which was one of the Galilean cities. It happened to be the Galilean city that Jesus was raised in.

And this story in verses 16 through 30 is unique to Luke. None of the other gospels mention it. Unless it is parallel with another, what is usually thought to be a different visit to Nazareth, which is found in Matthew 13 and in Mark 6. But I don't think that's the same one.

I think Jesus came to Nazareth twice. And Luke tells us only about the first time. And Matthew and Mark only tell us about the second time.

It says, So he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And he was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah.

And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written. And this is Isaiah 61, verses 1 and 2. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

So all bore witness to him and marveled at the gracious words, or in the Greek, the words of grace, which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is this not Joseph's son? And he said to them, You will surely say this proverb to me, Physician, heal yourself. Whatever we have heard that you have done in Capernaum, do also here in

your own country.

Then he said, Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land. But to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath in the region of Sidon to a woman who was a widow, and by the way, who happened to be a Gentile.

That's in 1 Kings 17, 9. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian, who again was incidentally a Gentile. 2 Kings 5, verses 1-14 tell that story. Then all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the city, and they led him to the brow of the hill on which the city was built, that they might throw him down over the cliff.

Now, this was probably intended to be a prelude to stoning. When a person would be stoned to death, they would be thrown either off a raised platform into a pit, or else they were just thrown off a cliff. They were thrown from some high place, presumably to initially break their bones, and then to hurl rocks down on them.

That was the typical way to stone people. And so they were going to throw him off a cliff. We're not told this is the case, but they probably intended to throw him off a cliff and then stone him.

But it just didn't happen. Then passing through the midst of them, he went his way. How he happened to pass through their midst, when he was being seized and held and dragged by a crowd, is not explained.

It is possible that it's supernatural. There was a time when the soldiers came to arrest him in the Garden of Gethsemane. He said, I am, and they all fell over backward.

He could have just walked away if he wanted to at that time. We don't know how he got out of this predicament. Some people think that he just stared them down, and his eyes were intimidating or something, so they just let go and let him walk out.

We don't have any idea. It doesn't say it was supernatural, but it seems like it might have been, since it would be very hard otherwise to get out of this situation. It was not his hour.

John frequently talks about how they took up stones to stone him, but it was not his time. It was not his hour, so he escaped from their midst. That is what happened here, apparently, but how it happened is not explained.

Now, let's talk about this sermon of his. First of all, it says he came to Nazareth, and I mentioned that I don't think it's the same time that he came to Nazareth as we read of in

Matthew 13 and in Mark 6, because Matthew himself seems to indicate there was an earlier coming to Nazareth at the beginning of the Galilean ministry. You'll see it in Matthew 4, and verse 13.

Look at Matthew 4, verses 12 and 13. This is immediately after Matthew's rendering of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, which is in the first 11 verses. Then, like Luke, Matthew skips to the Galilean ministry.

It says, now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he departed to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum. Notice, it doesn't talk about him coming to Nazareth, but it does mention him leaving Nazareth. When he left Nazareth, he set up his new home in Capernaum, and that's what we will find to be chronologically the case in Luke 2. Luke also.

So, it would appear that Matthew knew also about this Nazareth visit that preceded Jesus setting up home in Capernaum, but Luke gives the details of that Nazareth visit, which Matthew and Mark do not. So, Jesus came to Nazareth, which was his hometown, and that was a problem because the people felt like they knew him well, and they didn't. They knew him as a child.

They knew him as a youth. They knew him as a carpenter. They knew him as an ordinary person who had not begun to be moving in the power of the Holy Spirit, and now they were hearing rumors about him.

He had apparently not come to Nazareth very first. He'd come through Capernaum apparently, or maybe not, but he does say, you're going to say the things we've heard you do in Capernaum, do here also. Now, this sounds like it meant that he had been in Capernaum before coming to Nazareth, and that may well be the case, although there's a remote possibility that he's saying, I haven't been to Capernaum yet, but I'm going to go there, and you're going to hear about things, and someday you'll say to me, why don't you do the things at home that you did, that we've heard about you doing in Capernaum, things which he, of course, was anticipating by his statement, but had not yet happened.

I think it more likely that he had done something in Capernaum and now visited Nazareth, and they're going to say, why don't you do the same things here that you did there in Capernaum? Anyway, he begins by reading. Now, the synagogue protocol that is recorded here is precisely correct according to other known Jewish sources. The only thing is that Luke is an earlier source than any of the others we have.

Early synagogue protocol is found in other Jewish writings, but they're later than Luke, so Luke is the earliest record of this kind of protocol. What they do is there's a man who is the president of the synagogue. He was not necessarily a rabbi.

He didn't necessarily teach. He just made sure things went along okay, and the president of the synagogue would take the passage from scripture that was predetermined for that Sabbath day because they had a lectionary, and they had regular readings for every Sabbath of the year, and if they happened to have a teacher, well, they'd at least have a reader, and the president would give it to the person who's teaching there, the rabbi, if they had one there. They didn't always have one, and they would stand.

The reader would stand to read the scripture out of reverence to the scripture, and then the teacher would sit down to teach, which would make a distinction between his words and the words of God, standing to read the word of God, sitting to give his own commentary, and therefore placing his own commentary at a level below the word of God, obviously. But we read of this. Jesus is handed a scroll.

It's the scroll of Isaiah 61. It was apparently the assigned passage for that Sabbath, but Jesus could preach from any passage he wanted to and get his message across. It happened to be, fortunately, this one, which says that the prophet Isaiah said, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.

He's anointed me to do a bunch of things. Preach the gospel to the poor. He sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives.

Now, here it says, The recovery of sight to the blind. You won't find that in Isaiah 61 in your Bible because this is from the Septuagint. Jesus was reading from the Septuagint, and in the Septuagint it says, The recovery of sight to the blind.

In the Hebrew, and in our versions of Isaiah 61, it will say, The opening of the prison to those who are bound. But that's neither here nor there. The point is, he was there to liberate people and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

This is almost certainly a reference to the Jubilee. There was a year of Jubilee that was supposed to be observed every 50 years, during which all captives would be set free. All slaves would be released.

And Jesus said, Isaiah actually said, God has anointed me to preach essentially the Jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord where all the captives are to be set free and the prisons will be opened. Now, Jesus read this and said, Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. In other words, today the gospel has been preached.

The captives have been told that they can go free. The announcement of the acceptable year of the Lord has just happened as you've been listening. I'm the one who is anointed by the Spirit of God to make these announcements.

And you've just heard this scripture fulfilled by my making those announcements. Now, people marveled at that. And many of the gospels tell us, not about this story but others, that people marveled that Jesus taught with authority and not like the scribes.

Certainly this would be a case of that. The scribes never would say, This scripture is about me. By me reading it, I've just fulfilled it.

Jesus made unusual claims for himself that no rabbi would generally make. And yet, they saw them as words of grace. They were some kind of gracious or acceptable words that proceeded out of his mouth.

They marveled at that. But they said, But isn't this Joseph's son? This was his hometown. They knew Joseph.

Joseph was dead by this time in all likelihood. But they knew him still as Joseph's son. In other places, in Matthew 13 and Mark 6, which tell of the other visit to Nazareth, they also call him that.

They call him the carpenter. They have the same problem both times he comes to town. They say, This is the guy we knew.

He grew up here. He played with our children. He's not a miracle worker.

He worked here for 30 years. Never saw him do anything miraculous. He just built tables and stuff.

So they were stumbled by that. But they thought they knew him because they were so familiar with him, but they didn't ever know who he was. I suppose that'd be a good preaching point for a sermon.

People who think they know Jesus could have been in church all their life, they've been familiar with him, but they don't ever have had the, they've never had the revelation of who he is and really never known him. Like Philip, who Jesus said, Have I been so long time with you, Philip, and you don't know me. It's possible to have regular and frequent familiarity with Jesus, having been raised in a Christian society or Christian home or church, and yet never to have known who he is.

That was the case with the people in his own town. And he knew they were saying that, and he said to them, You will surely say this proverb to me, Physician, heal yourself. Now, did they ever say that to him? What does he mean by that, Physician, heal yourself? Some people might think that this was fulfilled when he was on the cross.

And in Luke 23, 35, they said he saved others. Himself he cannot save. You know, he's a physician, but he can't heal himself.

That may be what he's referring to, but I think he's using it more abstractly than that. Physician, heal yourself is like a proverb, a regular proverb. It's not very much unlike an English proverb, charity begins at home.

Charity begins at home means that don't go out and plan to save the world if you're not

doing anything good at home. You know, if you're charitable and you've got something to offer, do it at home first, and then go out and do it. It's like when missionaries have often gone out to foreign lands because they can't get along with anyone in the church.

You know, they're antisocial or poorly socialized people, so they go to Africa to be missionaries. I say if it doesn't work at home, don't export it, and that's basically what this proverb means. We say charity begins at home.

They would say physician, heal yourself, or the cobbler's kids need shoes, but they're the ones who don't have the shoes. The idea here is, we've heard you've done things in Capernaum. Why don't you do them here at home? Why don't you do them here, among your own relatives, as it were? You're a physician, heal yourself.

You're a miracle worker, do miracles for your own hometown, your own family, and I think that they're quoting, or Jesus is quoting a known proverb, and the explanation of what it means is in his next line. Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in your own country. That's sort of an expansion on the shorter proverb, physician, heal yourself.

You've done, you've healed others, heal at home too. Heal yourself. Now, it's interesting they don't say, whatever you did in Capernaum, they say, whatever we have heard that you did in Capernaum.

They're not committed to the fact that he really did it. They say, we've heard rumors about what you've done. If you've really done those things, why don't you show us? Why don't you do them here? And he said, assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.

If somebody is a prophet, they always had a time before they were a prophet. And the people who knew him before they were a prophet don't think of them as a prophet. And then when they come around acting like they're a prophet, even if they really are, those who are too familiar with them, they're too familiar with them.

They just don't see them as something special. They go somewhere else, people listen to them because they're unfamiliar. But at home, people know too much of your background and too much of your ordinariness.

And so, in your own home, it's hard to be a prophet. Now, he gives these two examples. And these two examples make them mad enough to want to kill him.

Now, for many years, I read this sermon, I thought, well, what was it so inflammatory about this? I mean, why is, why are they getting so mad? I mean, I can see people going out saying, that wasn't a very good sermon. But to want to string up the preacher, he's got to have said something pretty offensive. What was it? Well, he's going to expand on what he just said, that he may end up doing things in Capernaum that he won't do for his

own people because they're not going to accept him.

And there's some examples like this in the Old Testament, in the ministry of Elijah. There was a famine for three and a half years. Lots of widows, lots of people in Israel probably died in the famine.

But there was one that God sent Elijah to and he spared her life and fed her miraculously for three and a half years. And she was a Gentile. He said, there were truly many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, but he wasn't sent to any of the widows of Israel.

He was sent to a Gentile widow. And likewise, in the days of Elijah, there were many lepers in Israel. But the only leper that got healed through Elijah's ministry was a Gentile, Naaman, the Syrian.

The point he's making is this. God will help and do things for those who have faith. He'll even help Gentiles who have faith and pass over Jews who don't.

I think that's what made them so mad. But his point is, if you people in Nazareth, if you're stumbled by the fact that you're familiar with me and you can't trust me, well, you're not going to see any miracles here. People in Capernaum, if they have more faith than you do, they'll see the miracles and you won't.

A prophet is not well received in his own country and there's precedent in the Old Testament of people in Israel not accepting Elijah or receiving from Elijah or Elisha, but Gentiles who did. And that's how God works. Being a Jew isn't going to help you if you don't have faith.

Being a Gentile will if you do have faith. It's not your race, of course. But the point is, Elijah didn't do the miracles in his own home or Elisha didn't do them in his own home.

He did them for Gentiles outside of Israel. And that being so, this made them really angry because he seemed to be speaking too inclusively of God's concern even for Gentiles and Jews were really offended by that kind of thing. And of course, he was saying that they were like the Jews of Elijah's day and Elisha's day that didn't receive anything from God because they weren't like those Gentiles who believed.

This is just offensive to them and they got very angry and they went out and tried to kill him. But he passed through their midst and got away. Now, we have some more in this chapter to cover and I would like to have covered it by this time because it's about time to close this lecture.

Let me take one more pericope which is through verse 37 and I'll take it fairly briefly because it has its parallel in Mark and it says... No, I'm going to stop here. I'll tell you why. Because some of the parallels in Mark are... need some explanation because it's told quite differently than Mark tells it.

So, I'm going to take a break here and allow myself sufficient time and not have to rush through this particular story. So, strike that. We're going to stop at verse 30 and pick up the rest of chapter 4 in the next session.