

The Holy Spirit, Teacher's Guide

Week 4: The Spirit and the Christ

Luke 4:14–21; Acts 10:36–38

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This week the study reaches its center of gravity: the Spirit's work in the Christ Himself. Doctrinally, the lesson establishes that "Christ" and "Messiah" are not surnames but the title "Anointed One," and that the anointing in question is the Holy Spirit, poured out on Jesus without measure (John 3:34). The class will trace the Spirit through the whole arc of the Lord's coming: His conception (Luke 1:35), His anointing at baptism (Luke 3:21–22, the scene of Week 2), His leading and empowering (Luke 4:1, 14), His miracles (Matthew 12:28; Acts 10:38), His self-offering (Hebrews 9:14), and His resurrection (Romans 8:11). Two errors are quietly corrected along the way. First, any notion that Jesus was a mere man who became divine at His baptism: the Spirit's descent was His Messianic anointing for public ministry, not the moment of His deity, for the One anointed was already the eternal Word made flesh, conceived by the Spirit and announced as Son from the beginning. Second, the modern charismatic claim that Christians should seek a personal "anointing" of miraculous power: Jesus' anointing was unique to His office as the Christ, the prophet, priest, and king to whom all the oil-anointed offices of the Old Testament pointed.

Formationally, this may be the warmest week of the first month. Peter compresses the anointed life into one walking sentence: "He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). The Spirit's power on Jesus spent itself entirely on others, good news for the poor, liberty for captives, sight for the blind, and never once on Himself, a restraint the wilderness temptations prove. Students who see what Jesus did with omnipotence will be confronted with what they do with their own small allotments of time, money, ability, and influence. The disciple this lesson aims to form is one who has stopped asking how to acquire power and started asking how to spend himself.

Send students home with the title "Christ" restored to full meaning, with a firm grasp of why the Lord's anointing belongs to Him alone, and with one named act of good already scheduled on their calendar.

Question 1

Student Question:

In Luke 4:18–21, Jesus reads Isaiah 61 and announces, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." What exactly was Jesus claiming about Himself in that synagogue, and why does His anointing with the Spirit stand at the center of the claim?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Reconstruct the scene before pressing the doctrine, because Luke built the drama deliberately. Jesus has returned to Galilee “in the power of the Spirit” (4:14), His reputation spreading, and He comes to Nazareth, “where he had been brought up.” Synagogue custom invited visiting teachers to read and comment; the attendant hands Him Isaiah. Jesus finds Isaiah 61 and reads: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled the scroll, returned seat (teachers sat to teach), the fastened eyes, and the sentence: “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Spell out the claim in its parts. First, Jesus claims to be the speaker of Isaiah 61, the Spirit-anointed herald of God’s favor; in a word, the Messiah, since Messiah (Hebrew) and Christ (Greek) both mean Anointed One. Second, He claims the anointing has already happened, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me,” pointing back to the Jordan, where the Spirit descended in bodily form and the Father’s voice identified Him (Luke 3:21–22). Third, He claims the era of fulfillment has opened: “today.” Seven centuries of waiting end in a Nazareth synagogue on an ordinary Sabbath. No prophet ever talked like this; prophets said “thus says the Lord,” never “this Scripture is fulfilled in me.”

Notice why the anointing stands at the center of the claim. Israel’s expectation was shaped by texts that made the Spirit the mark of the Coming One: the shoot from Jesse’s stump on whom the Spirit of the Lord rests (Isaiah 11:1–2), the servant on whom God puts His Spirit (Isaiah 42:1), the anointed herald of chapter 61. To claim the anointing is to claim the office. This is also why John the Baptist was given the descending Spirit as the identifying sign: “he on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he” (John 1:32–34).

Keep one theological guardrail visible: the anointing at the Jordan equipped the already-divine Son for His public Messianic work; it did not make Him divine or make Him the Son. Luke has already shown Him conceived by the Spirit and called holy, the Son of God, from the womb (1:35), and the Father’s voice at the Jordan recognized, not created, the relationship. The old adoptionist error, that a mere man was promoted at baptism, founders on Luke’s own first chapters.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ and Messiah as titles meaning Anointed One, the anointing being the Holy Spirit
- Jesus’ threefold claim at Nazareth: the speaker of Isaiah 61, already anointed, fulfillment beginning today
- The Spirit as the prophesied mark of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1–2; 42:1; 61:1; John 1:32–34)
- “Today”: the era of fulfillment opened by Jesus Himself
- Against adoptionism: the anointing equipped the eternal Son for ministry, it did not create His sonship

- The uniqueness of Jesus' self-claim compared with every prophet before Him

Discussion Prompts

- Why is "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me" the natural opening line for the Messiah's announcement of Himself?
- What would you have thought, sitting in that synagogue, when Jesus said "today"?
- How does Luke guard us from concluding that Jesus became God's Son at His baptism?

Question 2

Student Question:

Jesus made this staggering announcement in His hometown synagogue, among people who thought they already knew Him ("Is not this Joseph's son?"). Where has familiarity dulled your own wonder at Jesus? What would it take this week to hear Him again as if for the first time?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The sequel in Nazareth is sobering: wonder curdled fast. "Is not this Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:22) was not a compliment; it was a ceiling. They had watched Him grow up, bought His carpentry, eaten at weddings with His family, and their very familiarity became the argument against His glory. By the end of the visit they were trying to throw Him off a cliff (4:28-29), and Jesus spoke the proverb that named the disease: "no prophet is acceptable in his hometown" (4:24). Mark adds the most chilling line: "he could do no mighty work there... and he marveled because of their unbelief" (Mark 6:5-6). Familiarity did not breed contempt so much as it bred deafness.

Now turn the mirror toward the church, gently but honestly. Lifelong Christians are the modern Nazarenes in this one respect: we have heard the name of Jesus since the nursery. We can finish the parables from memory, hum the hymns without the words touching bottom, take the Lord's Supper while our minds drift to lunch. The danger is not that we will reject Jesus outright but that we will domesticate Him, "Joseph's son," the familiar furniture of our religion, rather than the Anointed One whose word splits history. The Laodicean church managed to be lukewarm about Christ while He stood outside its own door (Revelation 3:14-20).

Offer concrete paths back to wonder, because the question asks for them. Read a familiar Gospel slowly in an unfamiliar way, aloud, or in one sitting, or imagining yourself on the synagogue bench. Pray before reading the way Samuel was taught: "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears." Come to the assembly early enough to be quiet before it starts; approach the Lord's table deliberately remembering one specific scene from the passion. Keep company with new converts, whose fresh astonishment is contagious. And obey something this week, because wonder and obedience feed each other; the dullness of familiarity is often the dullness of unapplied truth (James 1:22-25).

End the question with its hidden warning made plain: Nazareth shows that proximity to Jesus is not the same as faith in Him. Growing up around the Lord's people, His book, and His table is a privilege that can become a sedative. The remedy is not distance but attention, eyes fastened on Him (Luke 4:20) as though today, again, the Scripture were being fulfilled in our hearing, because in the truest sense, every time His word is opened, it is.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Familiarity as a ceiling: "Joseph's son" and the refusal of hometown glory
- Unbelief limiting blessing: Mark 6:5-6 and the Lord's marveling
- The churchgoer's version of Nazareth: domesticated faith, lukewarm nearness (Revelation 3:14-20)
- Practical paths back to wonder: slow reading, deliberate worship, fresh company, prompt obedience
- Proximity to Jesus is not faith in Jesus

Discussion Prompts

- Where in your spiritual life has repetition quietly become routine, and how would you tell the difference?
- Why do you think the people most familiar with Jesus found it hardest to believe in Him?
- What is one practice that has reawakened your wonder at Christ in the past, and could it serve you again this week?

Question 3

Student Question:

Luke traces the Spirit through the whole arc of Jesus' coming: conceived by the Spirit (Luke 1:35), anointed at His baptism (Luke 3:21-22), led and empowered by the Spirit (Luke 4:1, 14). What do these passages teach about how the Son carried out His earthly work, and what do they reveal about the Father, Son, and Spirit working together in redemption?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Trace the arc with the class, text by text, because the cumulative pattern is the lesson.

Conception: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:35); the incarnation itself was wrought by the Spirit's power, and the word "overshadow" recalls the Spirit hovering over creation's waters, a new creation beginning in Mary's womb. Anointing: at His baptism the Spirit descended "in bodily form, like a dove," with the Father's voice from heaven (Luke 3:21-22). Testing: Jesus, "full of the Holy Spirit," was "led by the Spirit in the wilderness" (Luke 4:1). Ministry: He "returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee" (4:14) and announced that Spirit-anointed mission at Nazareth (4:18). Beyond Luke's opening chapters, the pattern continues: He cast out demons "by the Spirit of God" (Matthew 12:28), "offered himself

without blemish to God” “through the eternal Spirit” (Hebrews 9:14), and was raised as Romans 8:11 says, by “the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead.” Conception, anointing, testing, ministry, cross, resurrection: the Spirit attends every station.

Draw the trinitarian conclusion the question points to, and let it connect back to Week 2. Redemption is the seamless work of the three persons: the Father sends, plans, and approves; the Son becomes flesh, obeys, and offers Himself; the Spirit conceives, anoints, empowers, and raises. No person of the Godhead is a spectator at any point of our salvation. The baptism scene showed the three together at one moment; the whole Gospel shows them together at every moment. This is why our salvation is secure beyond all human achievement: it was never a one-person project.

Address the question this pattern always raises: why would the eternal Son, fully God, need the Spirit at all? The answer touches the wonder of the incarnation. In becoming man, the Son did not surrender His deity but did humble Himself to a genuinely human life (Philippians 2:5–8), growing in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52), hungering, tiring, learning obedience (Hebrews 5:8). He chose to live His human life the way His people would have to live theirs: in prayerful dependence on the Father and in the fellowship and power of the Spirit. His dependence was not a deficiency of deity but the faithfulness of the true man, the second Adam succeeding by reliance on God where the first Adam fell by grasping independence.

That makes the pattern doubly precious: it is both unrepeatable and exemplary. Unrepeatable, because His conception, measureless anointing (John 3:34), and offices belong to Him alone. Exemplary, because the shape of His human life, dependent, prayerful, obedient, Spirit-accompanied, is the shape ours is meant to take (1 John 2:6), in the non-miraculous ways later weeks will unfold.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The Spirit at every station of the Lord’s work: conception to resurrection
- Luke 1:35 and the overshadowing Spirit: incarnation as new creation
- Redemption as the seamless work of Father, Son, and Spirit (building on Week 2)
- Why the divine Son lived in dependence: true humanity, the second Adam’s faithfulness
- Christ’s pattern as both unrepeatable (His offices) and exemplary (His dependence)
- Hebrews 9:14 and Romans 8:11: the Spirit at the cross and the empty tomb

Discussion Prompts

- Which point on the arc, conception, anointing, ministry, cross, or resurrection, most surprised you to find the Spirit present, and why?
- What does it tell us about the unity of the Godhead that all three persons are active in every stage of our salvation?
- How does Jesus’ chosen dependence rebuke both our self-sufficiency and our excuses?

Question 4

Student Question:

Jesus, though the eternal Son, lived His earthly life in dependence, praying constantly, leaning on the Spirit's power, and trusting His Father's will. Where in your life are you still trying to live self-sufficiently, as though dependence were weakness? What would real dependence on God look like in that place this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin with the portrait the Gospels actually paint, because many Christians have never noticed how dependent the Lord's life looked. He rose before day to pray (Mark 1:35) and withdrew to desolate places as a habit (Luke 5:16). He prayed all night before choosing the twelve (Luke 6:12), prayed at His baptism (Luke 3:21), prayed in Gethsemane until sweat fell like drops of blood (Luke 22:44). He declared, "the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing" (John 5:19), and "I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment" (John 12:49). The most powerful man who ever lived presented Himself as the most dependent man who ever lived. If prayer and reliance were that necessary to the incarnate Son, the disciple who lives prayerlessly is claiming to be stronger than his Lord.

Diagnose the disease the question names. Self-sufficiency rarely announces itself as pride; it disguises itself as competence, busyness, and not wanting to bother anyone, including God. Its symptoms are a prayer life reserved for emergencies, decisions made and only afterward submitted for divine rubber-stamping, an inability to rest (because everything depends on me), and a quiet resentment when help is needed. Scripture's verdict is blunt: "apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5); "unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1); God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

Reframe dependence as glory rather than weakness, because that is the gospel's reversal. In the kingdom, dependence is not the embarrassing exception but the design: branches drawing life from the vine (John 15:4-5), children asking a Father who delights to give (Matthew 7:7-11), the thorn kept so that power may be made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). Jesus' dependence was not a concession to incarnation only; it was the display of how creatures were always meant to live, and how the new creation lives now.

Then make it specific and weekly, as the question demands. Real dependence in a workplace pressure looks like praying before the meeting, not just rehearsing. In parenting, it looks like asking God for wisdom (James 1:5) before asking the internet. In a besetting sin, it looks like finally telling God the truth about it and asking a brother to carry it with you (Galatians 6:2; James 5:16). In finances, it looks like giving first as an act of trust. Have students choose the one arena where they have been functionally godless, not wicked, just operating alone, and decide what dependence will look like there before next Sunday.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The prayer life of Jesus as the portrait of dependent humanity (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 6:12)
- John 5:19 and 12:49: the Son's deliberate reliance on the Father
- Self-sufficiency diagnosed: emergency-only prayer, decide-then-bless decisions, inability to rest
- Dependence as design, not defect: vine and branches, asking children, power in weakness
- Specific arenas for practiced dependence: work, parenting, besetting sin, money
- Prayerlessness as practical atheism, however orthodox the beliefs

Discussion Prompts

- What does your prayer life, honestly described, say about how dependent you believe you are?
- Why does our culture train us to see needing help as failure, and how does Jesus contradict that?
- What is one decision you are currently making alone that should be made on your knees?

Question 5

Student Question:

The mission Jesus announced from Isaiah 61 is good news for the poor, liberty for captives, sight for the blind, freedom for the oppressed. How did Jesus fulfill each line of that mission, in both His miracles and His message, and what does this mission statement teach us about the purpose of the Spirit's anointing?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Take the mission statement line by line, and show the class that Jesus fulfilled each clause on two levels, the visible works and the deeper salvation they signified. Good news to the poor: He preached to the crowds the elites ignored, blessed the poor in spirit (Luke 6:20; Matthew 5:3), and was Himself poor (2 Corinthians 8:9); the common people heard Him gladly. Liberty to the captives: He released bodies from demonic bondage (Luke 4:33–36, the very next scene) and souls from sin's slavery, "everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin... if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:34–36). Recovering of sight to the blind: He opened literal eyes (Luke 7:21–22; 18:35–43) and used each healing as a parable of the deeper gift, "I came into this world... that those who do not see may see" (John 9, especially v. 39). Setting at liberty the oppressed (literally, the bruised or crushed): He healed all who were oppressed by the devil (Acts 10:38) and refused to break the bruised reed (Isaiah 42:3; Matthew 12:20). The proclamation of "the year of the Lord's favor" gathers it all up in Jubilee language (Leviticus 25): debts forgiven, slaves released, inheritance restored, the gospel age announced as God's great Jubilee.

Point out where Jesus stopped reading, because the detail teaches. Isaiah 61:2 continues, “and the day of vengeance of our God,” and Jesus rolled up the scroll mid-sentence. The first coming opened the era of favor; the day of vengeance awaits His return (2 Thessalonians 1:7–9). The Lord Himself divided the prophecy at exactly the right comma. This models careful Bible reading and warms the urgency of the gospel: it is the year of favor now; it will not be the year of favor forever.

Now answer the question’s last clause: what does this mission statement teach about the purpose of the Spirit’s anointing? Simply this: the anointing was for mission, and the mission was mercy. The Spirit did not come upon Jesus to make Him spectacular but to make Him a servant; the power was poured in so that good news could be poured out. Isaiah’s servant songs had said so all along: “I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations... a bruised reed he will not break” (Isaiah 42:1–3). Where the Spirit of the Lord truly is, the poor hear good news and the bruised are handled gently. That is the signature.

Guard one boundary while hearts are warm: the mission Jesus announced is gospel mission, not a merely social program. The deepest poverty is spiritual, the deepest captivity is sin, and the church’s continuation of this mission centers on proclaiming the liberty Christ purchased (Luke 24:46–47), while practicing the doing-good that adorns it (Galatians 6:10; James 1:27). Severing the deeds from the message produces philanthropy without salvation; severing the message from the deeds produces words the world has no reason to believe. Jesus did neither.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Isaiah 61 fulfilled on two levels: visible works signing deeper salvation
- Jubilee language: the gospel age as God’s year of favor (Leviticus 25)
- Where Jesus stopped reading: favor now, vengeance at His return (2 Thessalonians 1:7–9)
- The anointing’s purpose: power poured in so mercy could be poured out
- The bruised reed (Isaiah 42:3): gentleness as the Spirit’s signature
- Gospel mission with adorning deeds: neither social program alone nor message alone

Discussion Prompts

- Which line of the Nazareth mission statement do you most need Jesus to fulfill in your own life right now?
- Why is it significant that Jesus stopped reading before “the day of vengeance”?
- How does our congregation currently carry each line of this mission, and where are we weakest?

Question 6

Student Question:

Jesus aimed His good news first at the poor, the captive, the blind, and the bruised, people the world overlooks. Who are the overlooked people within your actual reach, in your family,

congregation, workplace, or street? Name one of them, and one act of good news you could carry to them this week.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The question moves the Nazareth manifesto from admiration to assignment, and the hinge is the word “overlooked.” Jesus aimed His announcement at categories the ancient world stepped past, the poor, the captive, the blind, the bruised, and His ministry kept that aim: He noticed the widow at Nain (Luke 7:13), the bleeding woman in the crush of the crowd (Luke 8:45–48), Zacchaeus up the tree (Luke 19:5), blind Bartimaeus whom the crowd shushed (Mark 10:48–49), children the disciples waved off (Mark 10:13–14). The pattern is unmistakable: the Anointed One had eyes for exactly the people everyone else had learned not to see.

Help the class translate the four categories into their actual reach, because “the poor” can stay safely abstract. The poor nearby: the family one missed paycheck from crisis, the single mother stretching groceries, the elderly member choosing between pills and heat. The captives: the brother fighting addiction, the friend imprisoned by debt or by an abusive situation, those literally in prison whom Christ counts visits to as visits to Himself (Matthew 25:36). The blind: often spiritual, the coworker who has never really heard the gospel, the neighbor with sincere but unscriptural faith. The bruised: the divorced who feel like marked men in church, the grieving once the casseroles stop, the depressed who have learned to perform fine, the teenager nobody greets. Every congregation, workplace, and street has all four.

Insist on the question’s discipline: name one person, and one act. Generalized compassion is a feeling; the Samaritan crossed the road to one bleeding man (Luke 10:33–34). The act should be concrete and scheduled: a grocery card delivered, a visit made, a meal cooked, a ride offered, an invitation to study the Bible, a letter to a prisoner, a seat shared with the teen at the edge of the lobby. Remind the class of the Lord’s arithmetic: a cup of cold water given in His name is registered in heaven (Matthew 10:42), and what was done “to one of the least of these my brothers” was done to Him (Matthew 25:40).

Close by relocating the power source, so this does not collapse into mere niceness. The church continues this mission not by self-generated charity but as people indwelt by the same Spirit (Week 9 ahead), bearing His fruit of kindness and goodness (Galatians 5:22, Week 10), carrying the same good news. “As he is, so also are we in this world” (1 John 4:17); “whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked” (1 John 2:6). The overlooked are not an interruption to the anointed mission; they are its address.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Jesus’ eye for the unseen: Nain, Bartimaeus, Zacchaeus, the children
- Translating the four categories into one’s actual reach: family, congregation, workplace, street
- One person, one act: the Samaritan’s concreteness against generalized compassion

- Matthew 25:31–46: ministry to the overlooked as ministry to Christ
- Doing good as gospel-adorned, Spirit-fruited living, not mere niceness (1 John 2:6)

Discussion Prompts

- Who in your weekly path have you learned not to see, and what trained you to overlook them?
- Why does Jesus insist on concrete acts toward particular people rather than warm feelings toward humanity?
- What would change in our community's view of the church if every member carried good news to one overlooked person this month?

Question 7

Student Question:

In Acts 10:38, Peter says God anointed Jesus “with the Holy Spirit and with power,” and that He healed “all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.” Why were the miracles of Jesus essential to His identity and mission (see also Matthew 12:28; John 5:36; Acts 2:22), and what did they prove about Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Acts 10:38 is Peter's gospel in miniature, preached to Cornelius's household: God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power; He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; God was with Him. The miracles sit at the center of the sentence, and the question asks why they were essential. Gather the Bible's own answers. First, the miracles were His credentials, the Father's testimony: “the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me” (John 5:36). Peter says the same at Pentecost: “a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst” (Acts 2:22). Nicodemus drew the intended conclusion: “no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him” (John 3:2).

Second, the miracles were enacted prophecy, the very marks Isaiah gave for the Messianic age. When John the Baptist wavered in prison, Jesus answered with the checklist: “the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them” (Luke 7:22, echoing Isaiah 35:5–6; 61:1). The miracles were Isaiah 61 made visible, the Nazareth sermon performed.

Third, the miracles declared the arrival of the kingdom and the defeat of the devil's tyranny: “if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28). Every exorcism was a raid on the strong man's house by One who had already bound him (Matthew 12:29); every healing pushed back the curse. “Oppressed by the devil” in Acts 10:38 frames sickness and bondage as enemy occupation, and Jesus as the liberator. And the miracles revealed His heart as much as His power: moved with compassion, He touched

lepers (Mark 1:41), and He healed all who came, never charging, never failing, never performing on demand for spectacle (Luke 23:8-9).

Mark the character of these signs, because it prepares Weeks 7 and 8: instant, complete, public, undeniable even to enemies (“that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it,” Acts 4:16; compare John 11:47). The purpose was evidential, that you may believe (John 20:30-31), which is exactly the purpose Hebrews 2:3-4 assigns to the apostolic miracles that followed. Miracle in Scripture is never an end in itself; it is God’s notarized seal on His messenger and message. Once the class grasps that purpose here, the later lessons on the duration of the gifts will follow naturally.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Miracles as divine attestation: John 5:36; Acts 2:22; John 3:2
- Miracles as enacted prophecy: the Isaiah checklist given to John the Baptist (Luke 7:22)
- Miracles as kingdom arrival and the binding of the strong man (Matthew 12:28-29)
- Compassion in the miracles: power governed by mercy, never spectacle
- The character of true biblical miracles: instant, complete, public, undeniable (Acts 4:16)
- The evidential purpose (John 20:30-31) preparing the ground for Weeks 7 and 8

Discussion Prompts

- Why did Jesus answer John the Baptist’s doubts with a list of miracles rather than a simple yes?
- What do the style and manner of Jesus’ miracles, instant, complete, compassionate, teach us to make of modern claims that resemble none of those traits?
- How do the recorded signs still accomplish their purpose, “that you may believe,” in a reader today?

Question 8

Student Question:

Jesus had more power than any person who ever walked the earth, and He spent it on others, never once using it selfishly, even when starving in the wilderness. How do you tend to spend the resources God has given you, your time, money, abilities, and influence? What is one specific way you can spend power on someone else’s good this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Set the contrast at the question’s heart with the wilderness scene, because it is the proof that Jesus never spent power on Himself. Fresh from His anointing, “full of the Holy Spirit,” He fasted forty days, and the first temptation aimed exactly here: “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread” (Luke 4:3). He was starving; He had the power; the use seemed harmless. He refused, choosing to live by God’s word rather than self-serve with God’s power.

The same restraint held to the end: He would not call twelve legions of angels (Matthew 26:53), and the mockers at the cross stated the truth better than they knew, “He saved others; he cannot save himself” (Mark 15:31). He could have. He would not, because saving others and saving Himself could not both happen. Omnipotence spent itself to the last coin on other people.

Now define power downward into the class’s actual hands, because most students disqualify themselves as powerless. Power is simply capacity: time, money, skills, health, a vehicle, a vote, a position at work, a reputation, a kitchen, an address book. Everyone in the room holds some. Scripture’s stewardship texts assume it: “as each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10–11); the talents distributed “to each according to his ability” (Matthew 25:14–30); and the chilling portrait of the rich fool, whose plans for his surplus contained no person but himself, “my crops, my barns, my grain, my soul” (Luke 12:16–21). The fool was not condemned for having power but for spending it all at one address.

Expose the default setting honestly. Left unexamined, our resources flow toward comfort, security, and self-advancement, and the leftovers, of time, of money, of energy, go to others. The anointed pattern reverses the flow: “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Paul states the disciples’ version: “let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others,” and grounds it in the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:4–5). Even strength itself is reassigned: “we who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Romans 15:1).

Require the question’s specificity: one way, this week, to spend power on someone else’s good. The hour given to the lonely instead of the screen. The skill donated, the tool lent, the meal made, the influence used to open a door for someone who could never repay it (Luke 14:12–14). Remind students of the strange economics of the kingdom: spent power is not lost but banked, “treasure in the heavens that does not fail” (Luke 12:33), and “it is more blessed to give than to receive,” words of Jesus that Paul thought worth quoting precisely in a sermon about labor and generosity (Acts 20:35).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The wilderness restraint: power never once used in self-service (Luke 4:3–4; Matthew 26:53)
- “He saved others; he cannot save himself”: the mockery that preached the gospel
- Power defined as capacity: time, money, skill, influence, reputation, address book
- Stewardship of varied grace (1 Peter 4:10–11) and the talents (Matthew 25:14–30)
- The rich fool: power spent at only one address (Luke 12:16–21)
- Kingdom economics: spending as banking (Luke 12:33; Acts 20:35)

Discussion Prompts

- Where does your discretionary time and money actually flow, and what would your bank and calendar testify about you?
- Why is the temptation to use legitimate power for ourselves so much subtler than the temptation to do obvious evil?
- What is one resource you have been guarding that God may be asking you to spend this week, and on whom?

Question 9

Student Question:

Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One, anointed not with oil but with the Spirit, as prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22), priest (Hebrews 4:14–16), and king (Acts 2:30–36). Some today claim Christians should seek their own “anointing” of miraculous power. From this week’s passages, what made Jesus’ anointing unique to Him as the Christ, and how does His threefold office answer every need His people have?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the week’s heaviest doctrinal block, and it answers a live claim: that Christians today should seek a personal “anointing” of miraculous power, language common in charismatic and word-of-faith circles, where “the anointing” names a transferable spiritual force that falls on preachers, services, and even objects. The biblical reply begins by restoring the word to its owner. Anointing in Israel installed men into office: prophets (1 Kings 19:16), priests (Exodus 29:7), and kings (1 Samuel 16:13), oil marking God’s chosen and equipping him for God’s task. Every one of those oil-marked offices was a signpost pointing to one Person: the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One, on whom would rest not oil but the Spirit Himself, without measure (Isaiah 61:1; John 3:34). To claim Jesus’ anointing for ourselves is to misread the entire Old Testament’s forward motion; the signs all pointed to Him, not to us.

Walk the threefold office, because it shows the anointing fulfilled and occupied. Prophet: Moses promised a prophet like himself whom Israel must hear (Deuteronomy 18:15), and Peter declares Jesus that prophet (Acts 3:22–26); the Father’s own voice commands, “listen to him” (Luke 9:35), and God now speaks by His Son (Hebrews 1:1–2). Priest: Jesus is the great high priest who passed through the heavens, able to sympathize, ever living to intercede (Hebrews 4:14–16; 7:25). King: God swore to seat David’s descendant on his throne, and Peter announces it accomplished at the resurrection and ascension, “God has made him both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:30–36); He reigns now (1 Corinthians 15:25). Prophet, priest, and king, all three anointed offices, filled by one Person, permanently. There is no vacancy for a second anointed one; indeed, “antichrist” language in John warns about rivals to the Anointed One (1 John 2:18–22).

Then answer the modern claim directly, with both testaments open. First, the unique Messianic anointing is His alone, by definition; we wear His title derivatively, “Christians,” belonging to the Christ, not little anointed messiahs. Second, when the New Testament does apply anointing

language to believers, “God... has anointed us” (2 Corinthians 1:21–22), “you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge” (1 John 2:20, 27), the context is God’s establishing, sealing, and the truth all Christians received, not a miraculous power layer for elite believers; John’s whole point is that ordinary Christians already had the truth and needed no new revelators. Third, the miraculous endowments of the apostolic age came by specific, traceable means, Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2 and 10, and the laying on of the apostles’ hands (Acts 8:14–18), which Weeks 6 through 8 will examine; they were never obtained by seeking experiences at the front of an assembly. The modern “anointing” that must be worked up with music and atmosphere, that fails quietly and unverifiably, bears no resemblance to the anointing that opened blind eyes in the street.

Finish where the question finishes: His threefold office answers every need His people have. Need truth? The Prophet has spoken, fully and finally (John 16:13, next week’s text; Hebrews 1:1–2). Need forgiveness and an advocate? The Priest has offered Himself once for all and always lives to intercede (Hebrews 7:25–27; 10:12). Need protection, purpose, and a future? The King reigns and must reign until every enemy is under His feet (1 Corinthians 15:25–26). The student who grasps this stops envying first-century gifts or chasing modern counterfeits, because he possesses the Anointed One Himself, and in Him every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3). Our calling is not to seek His anointing but to obey His prophethood, trust His priesthood, and bow to His kingship.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Anointing as installation to office: prophets, priests, and kings pointing to the Christ
- The Spirit without measure (John 3:34): Jesus’ anointing unique and unrepeatable
- The threefold office occupied: Prophet (Acts 3:22), Priest (Hebrews 4:14–16), King (Acts 2:30–36)
- 2 Corinthians 1:21–22 and 1 John 2:20, 27: believer “anointing” as establishing and the received truth, not miraculous power
- Modern “anointing” claims measured against the traceable means and verifiable nature of biblical power
- Christ reigning now (Acts 2:33–36; 1 Corinthians 15:25), against postponed-kingdom thinking
- Every need answered in His offices: truth, intercession, reign

Discussion Prompts

- Why does the title “Christ” itself argue against Christians seeking their own miraculous anointing?
- How would you respond, gently, to a friend who says her church has a powerfully anointed preacher with healing gifts?
- Which of the three offices, prophet, priest, or king, do you lean on least in daily life, and what would change if you leaned on it more?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across this week's passages, the synagogue in Nazareth and Peter's summary in Caesarea. The Spirit-anointed Jesus went about doing good, and He now sends His people to walk as He walked (1 John 2:6). Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through this truth, and one concrete act of "going about doing good" you will carry out before this week ends.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Draw the week's two scenes together one last time: Nazareth, where the Anointed One announced His mission with the scroll still warm in His hands, and Caesarea, where Peter compressed thirty-three years into "he went about doing good." Between the announcement and the summary stretches the most beautiful life ever lived, and 1 John 2:6 hands that life to the class as a pattern: "whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." The capstone question asks each student to receive it as formation, not information.

Help students see the shape of the imitation rightly, because this week has carefully distinguished the imitable from the unique. We do not imitate His miracles, His offices, or His measureless anointing; those are His alone, and chasing them is the error Question 9 answered. We do imitate His direction of travel: dependence on the Father expressed in real prayer, attention to the overlooked, power spent on others, good news carried to the poor in spirit, gentleness with bruised reeds. The Spirit who anointed Him now works in Christians through His word and providence to reproduce exactly that family resemblance (Romans 8:29; Galatians 5:22-23, ahead in Week 10).

Then hold the class to the assignment's two parts. One way Jesus is forming you: listen for answers that name an interior change, a deflated self-sufficiency, a recovered wonder, a conscience awakened about hoarded resources, a new tenderness toward someone previously invisible. One concrete act of going about doing good before the week ends: scheduled, named, and small enough to actually happen. A visit, a meal, a debt forgiven, a conversation opened, an apology owed for years. Encourage students to write it down and tell one other person, because witnessed intentions survive (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; Hebrews 10:24, "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works").

Send them out with the trajectory of the study: the Anointed One, having finished His work, ascended to pour out the Spirit He had promised (Acts 2:33). Next week we watch Him keep the promise that stands behind our New Testaments, the Spirit of truth guiding the apostles into all the truth. The Christ who went about doing good has not stopped giving; the rest of this study is the inventory of His gifts.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- 1 John 2:6: walking as He walked, the anointed life as the disciple's pattern
- Distinguishing the imitable (dependence, mercy, spent power) from the unique (offices, miracles, measureless anointing)
- Conformity to the Son's image as the Spirit's formational goal (Romans 8:29)
- Witnessed, written, scheduled commitments (Hebrews 10:24)
- The bridge to Week 5: the ascended Christ pouring out the promised Spirit (Acts 2:33)

Discussion Prompts

- If your congregation walked as Jesus walked for one year, what would your town notice first?
- Which moment from this week's passages will stay with you longest, and why?
- What is your one named act of good for this week, and whom will you tell so it actually happens?