

The Holy Spirit

Week 4: The Spirit and the Christ -- Luke 4:14-21; Acts 10:36-38

It is an ordinary Sabbath in Nazareth, the kind of small town where everyone knows whose son you are. The synagogue smells of dust and wool. Familiar faces line the benches: men who bought tables from Joseph's shop, women who watched Mary's boy grow up. Jesus stands to read, as visitors and townsmen often did, and the attendant hands Him the scroll of Isaiah. He unrolls it deliberately, finds the place He wants, and reads words that had waited seven hundred years for this morning: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor." Then He rolls up the scroll, hands it back, sits down to teach, and with every eye in the room fastened on Him says the unthinkable: "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Anointed. The word carried a thousand years of longing. Israel anointed prophets, priests, and kings by pouring oil on their heads, marking them as chosen and equipped by God. And Israel waited for the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ, the titles mean exactly that, on whom the Spirit of the Lord would rest in fullness (Isaiah 11:1-2; 61:1). When Peter later summed up the whole story for a Roman officer named Cornelius, this is the sentence he reached for: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

Once you see it, the Spirit is everywhere in the life of Jesus. Conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). Anointed at His baptism as the Spirit descended like a dove (Luke 3:21-22). Led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and returning "in the power of the Spirit" to Galilee (Luke 4:1, 14). Casting out demons by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28). Offering Himself without blemish through the eternal Spirit (Hebrews 9:14), and raised from the dead in connection with the Spirit's power (Romans 8:11). The Father, the Son, and the Spirit, whom we met as three distinct persons in Week 2, worked the whole work of redemption together. The Son did not merely visit our world; He walked through it anointed.

And here is what should warm your heart this week: look at what the Anointed One did with all that power. He did not build a palace or raise an army. "He went about doing good." Good news for the poor. Liberty for captives. Sight for the blind. Freedom for the bruised. The Spirit's anointing on Jesus poured itself out in mercy, which tells you what God's power is for, and what God's heart is like. This week we watch the Spirit and the Christ together, and we let the sight of it remake what we do with whatever God has placed in our hands.

Group Discussion: The titles "Messiah" and "Christ" both mean "Anointed One," yet many Christians say the word "Christ" every day without thinking of the Holy Spirit at all. What difference does it make to realize that the very name we wear points to Jesus as the One anointed with the Spirit?

Personal Reflection: Peter summarized the anointed life of Jesus in four words: “He went about doing good.” If someone summarized your last month in one sentence, what would it honestly say? What would need to change for “doing good” to become the pattern of your ordinary days?

Read Luke 4:14–21; Acts 10:36–38

Study Questions

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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?
5. 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?

6. 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.
7. 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?
8. 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?
9. 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?
10. 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.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Isaiah 11:1–5, the Branch on whom the sevenfold Spirit rests; Isaiah 42:1–4, the chosen servant with God’s Spirit who will not break a bruised reed; Matthew 12:15–

21, Matthew's declaration that Jesus fulfilled that servant song; John 3:34, the One God sent gives the words of God, for He gives the Spirit without measure; Hebrews 1:8-9, the Son anointed with the oil of gladness beyond His companions