

NOTES FROM PASTOR TIM'S SERMON –22nd January 2023 am

NEW SERIES FROM LUKE'S GOSPEL "God's love for the lowest"

Part 6 "Here comes the Son"

Scripture references from the ESV

Luke 3:21-4:15 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son;^[c] with you I am well pleased."^[d]

²³ Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, ²⁴ the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, ²⁵ the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, ²⁶ the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, ²⁷ the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,^[e] the son of Neri, ²⁸ the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, ²⁹ the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, ³⁰ the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, ³¹ the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, ³² the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, ³³ the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, ³⁴ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, ³⁵ the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶ the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, ³⁷ the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, ³⁸ the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

4 ¹And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ²for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. ³The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" ⁵And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. ⁷If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸And Jesus answered him, "It is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" ⁹And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on

the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,"¹⁰ for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,'"¹¹ and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"¹² And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³ And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.¹⁴ And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

SERMON BEGINS

Many people in our world today do not see Jesus as relevant to their lives. Atheists and people of other religions all have in common the idea that Jesus is not relevant for them. Those who feel they are not good enough because they have made a mess of their lives also share this idea. The latest census figures suggest that more than 50% of the UK population now have this same view. As believers, we can see the relevance of Jesus for us personally, but

- do we really believe that Jesus is relevant for all those other people?
- do we believe that, just as this earth is utterly dependent on our nearest star, the sun, for life so
 - **the whole of humanity is utterly dependent on Jesus?**
- Do we really believe that, just as the earth orbits around the sun, so **the whole of human life orbits around Jesus, who is both Son of God and Son of Man?**

We need to see that Jesus is not just for Christian parents and families, people who appear to be living a good life or people living in the Western world. Rather we need to truly believe that:

Jesus is the Son for all people and is essential for life on earth and eternal life with God.

Luke wrote his gospel for Theophilus, who had questions about Jesus. One of those questions might well have been:

- Can this rejected Messiah really save me?

Theophilus had been told that, in order to come to God, he needed to follow Jesus, a Jew who had been rejected as Messiah by his own people. How, then, could Theophilus be sure that Jesus was the authentic Son of God?

Luke gives the answer. In **vv21-22** (above) we hear God commending Jesus, who is thus seen to be God the Son, anointed by God the Spirit.

Jesus is THE SON with whom God the Father is well pleased.

There can be no greater commendation than to hear God say '**with you I am well pleased**'. Here is the perfect human being. He is the one:

- In whom God finds no fault
- Who is fully acceptable to God
- Who is joyfully welcomed into God's presence

Luke is assuring his readers that, although human beings may have rejected Jesus, God had not rejected him. Instead, God has put his stamp of approval on Jesus, which raises the following question.

- Why is God the Father well pleased with his Son and what does this mean for us and the rest of humanity?

Here are three answers:

1. **He is the Son for all people, including us.** We can trust Jesus because God commends him, as Theophilus learned but he may also have wondered whether Jesus was relevant for him. Theophilus was a Gentile, not a Jew, so it would have been natural to ask whether the Jewish Saviour was only relevant for the Jews. It is the same question that many ask about Jesus today. Is he relevant for me?

Luke answers this by using the genealogy of Jesus, tracing his line right back to Adam, the father of the human race (**vv23-38** above), created by God and therefore called the son of God (**v38**). We can see now that:

- Jesus is the unique and beloved Son of God, one with the Father (**v22** above)
- Jesus is a son of Adam, according to the flesh (**v38** above)

Therefore, uniquely, Jesus came as the Son of God and Son of Man

not just for Jewish people but for all who are descended from Adam – which includes every human being.

This has the following astounding implications:

- Jesus is the only Saviour approved by God for all humanity.
- God does not recognise any other Saviour than his beloved Son, Jesus.
- God does not have any other way of saving us except through the Son with whom he is well pleased – the Lord Jesus Christ

That is the exclusive claim of scripture and it is why we go into all the world with the message that **only Jesus saves**.

2. **He is the Son who washes us clean from sin.** Unless we know that we are sinners, this point will not make sense. We need to ask ourselves whether we have become self-righteous, and have lost that awareness.

John's baptism was a **baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3)**.

Everyone who came to John for baptism confessed that they were sinners before they were baptised. However, Jesus had no sin of his own. He had nothing to confess. He was absolutely righteous before God.

- Jesus had no need for the baptism of repentance so why did he get baptised? He was identifying with sinful humanity, with all of us. He had every right to stand in the water and condemn all those who came for baptism, but he didn't. Instead, although sinless, he stood in the water **with** sinners. He did this because he came to deal with our sin and wash us clean from it. By his baptism:

- He identifies with us in our sin and points forward to the work he will do to cleanse us from that sin
- He enacts his death on the cross, a death that would wash away the record of our sins forever

Water baptism is important. It is an act of obedience for those who claim to be followers of Jesus, but water baptism does not wash away our sin. It only symbolically points to what Jesus has done to cleanse us from sin.

It is Jesus alone who washes away our sin.

Imagine a book where everything you have done wrong is recorded – every lie, hateful comment, immoral thought or action, every desire for things that have pushed God out and every act of defiance against him. On that day when Jesus returns in power and glory – a day that is definitely coming - that book will be opened and we will be judged on the record of our sin. We will wonder what is coming, but when the book is opened we will find that

there is no record of sin, because Jesus' blood has washed it clean.

That is what Jesus has done for his people. He has taken all our sin on himself, becoming the guilty one before God. Through his death, he is punished with the eternal death we deserve. In the process our sin is atoned for.

That is the Gospel, the message we are meant to pass on to other people.

In order to stand before God, we need more than just having our sins washed away. We need a positive righteousness and Jesus does that for us as well.

3. He is the Son who secures righteousness for us. Everyone who lives is descended from Adam. With the exception of Jesus, every human being has inherited Adam's sin. Adam was in a perfect environment. He was given one command by God : **And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat^[d] of it you shall surely die."** (Gen 2:16-17) However, when tempted by the devil, Adam failed to obey God and plunged the whole of humanity into sin, bringing a curse on us all.

Jesus was born into this cursed, sinful world. Jesus, who is the Son of Adam (truly human) and Son of God (truly divine and sinless) was placed in a far from perfect environment and tempted by the devil to rebel against God's commands, just as Adam was (4:1-13 above).

We have a vested interest in this temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. We are not passive spectators. If Jesus failed the test, then there is no hope for humanity to be put right with God. If Jesus succumbs to temptation:

- He will not be able to be the sinless sacrifice to atone for our sin and we will not have a righteousness to commend us to God.

The whole of human salvation hangs in the balance during this 40-day temptation of Christ.

Jesus uses the word of God to fight against the devil, even when the devil twists scripture to tempt him. The devil is a liar, who deceived Adam and deceives us into following his ways. Jesus fights his lies with the truth of scripture and Jesus triumphs where Adam failed. As a result, he remained the sinless, righteous Son of God and Son of Man, and in doing so secures righteousness for us. Not only does he take our sin on himself and make atonement for us, but his perfect righteousness is offered to us so that we have a righteousness to stand before God.

God the Father is well pleased with his Son because:

- He is the Son for all people, including us
- He is the Son who washes us clean from sin
- He is the Son who secures righteousness for us

What must we do in the light of this?

- a) Commit ourselves to Jesus.** Our greatest need is not to be comfortable in this life (though we think it is).

Our greatest need is to be right with God.

We need to have the dirt of our sin washed away and to be clothed in the righteousness of a perfect life. The only one who can secure that for us is Jesus. There is no other Saviour to put us right with God. We cannot do it ourselves and religion won't do it for us.

It is Jesus alone who does it, and he does it as we commit ourselves to him.

As we turn from the sin of trying to do life on our own and turn to Jesus, trusting only in him, so we are put right with God.

We become adopted sons of God, with whom God is well pleased.

- b) Rely on his Spirit.** Jesus shows us what a life lived in dependence on the Spirit of God looks like. Jesus prayed and was anointed with the Spirit of God (3:21-2 above). Then the Spirit led him (4:1-2 above) in the wilderness, and again as

Jesus returned to Galilee, he did so in **the power of the Spirit (v14 above)**. In the fight against temptation, Jesus depended on the word of God (**4:4,8,12 above**). Jesus, in his humanity lived a life dependent on God the Spirit - a life of prayer and obedience, wielding God's word against the lies of the devil.

That is the life we are called to. We experience the work of the Spirit in our lives as we make use of God's word and pray it over our own life and the lives of others.

Through Bible and prayer, the Spirit of God guides us, instructs us and strengthens us so that we are able to fight against the temptations of the devil, the world around us and our own sinful desires. Thus, we are able to live lives that are obedient to God.

We cannot live that life without the word and the Spirit working together.

c) **Offer Jesus to all.** One of the ways we live obediently is in offering Jesus to others. All those who think Jesus is irrelevant need to know that that he is entirely relevant for them and their only hope is in him.

- The only Son of God is the only way any of us can become sons of God.
- Ask yourself if you truly believe that the world is lost and dying.
- Then ask yourself if you truly believe that Jesus is the only hope for this lost and dying world.

If you truly believe that, then you will want to offer Jesus to everyone because Jesus is the Saviour for all humanity.