

## Luke 4:16-30; Matt 21:10-17

### ice breaker

Share a time when you received something that didn't match your expectations (perhaps like an online order). How did you respond?

### overview

- Jesus overturned the idea that poverty or sickness comes from God's disfavour.
- Jesus did not come for the self-sufficient. He came for the poor and needy - all who recognise their need for God.
- The grace of God is received through humble faith, rather than pride or entitlement, yet it is more radical than we can imagine.
- Jesus emphasised mercy over judgment, grace over vengeance.

### discussion

- 1** Read Luke 4:14-30 together. What was Jesus' *one-sentence sermon* (in verse 21)? And why was this so provocative?
- 2** Discuss how comfort, wealth, and/or religious activity make it more difficult for us to recognise our spiritual poverty and need for the gospel. What things in your life might be insulating you from desperately seeking Jesus?
- 3** Jesus welcomed the outsider; how does this change the way we think about who belongs in God's kingdom?

## go deeper

This sermon from Ps Nathan explores Jesus' inaugural message in Luke 4, where He declares His mission to bring good news to the poor, freedom to captives, and sight to the blind, as He read from Isaiah 61 in the synagogue. Jesus consistently challenged the religious leaders' expectations by extending grace to those considered *outsiders*: the Gentiles, the poor, and the marginalised, all while confronting those who thought they were spiritually secure.

The gospel is not about earning God's favour through religious performance, but about recognising our spiritual poverty and receiving the Lord's unmerited grace. Jesus' ministry reveals that those who think they are on the *inside* are often on the *outside*, while those written off by society are the very ones for whom He came.

In his hometown, where the Nazarenes initially accepted the teaching of Jesus, suddenly turned on Him with murderous rage after He deliberately redacted Isaiah 61:2 from His sermon, the "*day of vengeance of our God*". The people wanted a Messiah who would judge their enemies, thereby (supposedly) elevating their own standing before man and God. Instead, Jesus came with radical grace.

Jesus furthered His point by shockingly highlighting two Gentiles to illustrate the kind of faith He requires, in the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian.

The gospel brings transformation from blindness to sight, from captivity to freedom, and draws the materially and spiritually poor who are truly seeking good news, while comfort and religious achievement can insulate people from recognising their need for grace.

## application

Take turns going around the group to complete **Application 1** together, then spend a few minutes completing **Application 2** separately.

### **Application 1: Embrace Your Poverty**

- Identify one area where you've been self-sufficient rather than dependent on God
- Confess this to a trusted friend or group member
- Ask God to meet you in your need

### **Application 2: Practice Radical Humility**

- Like Naaman, identify whose voice you've been ignoring (perhaps someone "beneath" your status)
- Be willing to receive wisdom or correction from an unexpected source
- Journal about what God teaches you through this experience

## prayer points

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- Soft hearts that are open to the Lord's radical grace
- Eyes to see others through the Lord's perspective
- Humility to receive from unlikely sources, much like the two Gentiles to whom Jesus referred
- Breakthrough and transformation in areas where you feel spiritually poor

## final thought

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The gospel invites us to see the world through Jesus' eyes, embracing those overlooked by society and freed from the illusions of status or performance. True transformation begins when we confront our own need for grace and let that radical mercy flow through us to others.

# CONNECT GROUPS

Good News For The Poor

Ps Nathan Bean

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Hi Connect Group Leader!

*This topic highlights the danger of operating with spiritual pride, in tension with remaining spiritually poor. Facilitate reflection on this tension, and encourage vulnerable sharing around this topic.*

Use the Notes above or this Resource – whatever you feel will work best for your group.

Prayer/praise report from your group? Anything else you think we should know? [Click here](#) to pass it on to our Pastoral Team so we can address it in our weekly meeting.

## additional questions

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Q1 - Why do you think Jesus intentionally omitted the 'day of vengeance' when reading from Isaiah 61, and what does this reveal about the nature of His mission?

Q2 - Why did Jesus use examples of Gentiles like the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian to illustrate true faith, and how should this shape our view of whom God seeks?

Q3 - Rather than judging people, what would change in our communities if we truly saw people through the Father's heart, and therefore, disciplined them as such?

## quiet reflection exercise

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**Read together:** "The spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

**Reflect silently for 2 minutes:**

- Where am I poor and in need of good news?
- Where am I captive and in need of freedom?
- Where am I blind and in need of sight?
- How is Jesus meeting me in these places?