

[Physician, Heal Thyself] / Gospel of Luke 4:14 – 43

~ Our Spiritual Safari ended our last report way out in the wilderness - with Satan fleeing and Jesus having proven His deity. More specifically, the Son of God physically demonstrated the impossibility of sin in His life. Christ demonstrated on earth that He could not possibly fall to Satan under ANY circumstances or conditions in the spiritual or physical realm. Of course, after forty days without eating, the Lord Jesus then needed physical strengthening. Temptation will do one of two things to a regular person like you or me: harden you or soften you; sweeten you or sour you. Remember, in the days of Moses, Pharaoh already had a hardened heart – God only brought that hardness out in the open! Well, it behooved Jesus to be made like unto His brethren, so after being tempted, He needed to be strengthened....

14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

~ So, we see the people praising and complimenting Jesus in the synagogue while, at the same time, rejecting Him. Many Christians think they praise Jesus, but they flatly deny Him at every turn - and simultaneously. It is possible to sing the doxology in a crowd of thousands of people while denying the claims of Christ in the Word of God. It happens all the time. The same crowd crying "hosanna" one day shouts out "crucify Him" the next day. The crucifixion painting by Tintoretto has a donkey lurking in the background feeding on withered palm branches and the cross is empty. Frankly, that may be the only religious painting that ever got the imagery right; one day He entered Jerusalem to the praise of the people, and the next day they killed Him! So, our Spiritual Safari arrives at this scintillating story that's splashing with life and light. It's fragrant in meaning and lovely to look at, too....

16 And 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 stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

~ Luke is the only Gospel writer to record this remarkable incident with the Lord Jesus. It is so remarkable, in fact, that we must attempt to communicate the fullness of what just happened. Of course, this is Jesus first return to His hometown of Nazareth, and it should be a welcome event for Him - but it's not! Jesus is only doing what He has always done - as was His custom – it says. So, we see Jesus in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Jesus never worshipped or taught except in the properly appointed place for the occasion. It is pious nonsense to say you can worship God equally in your leisure activities as easily as you can at church service on Sunday morning or the mid-week Bible study. Do you go golfing to worship God or to play golf? If you take a golf bag and chase a little white ball for miles to worship God, you better re-evaluate things. Let's not kid ourselves about this matter because we aren't kidding anyone else! Many say they cannot find a Bible teaching church. My answer to that is: go where the Holy Spirit leads you to worship after praying about it. God may want you to be the one taking the message to those people. Well, they don't seem to be interested in doing that. The truth is: they don't worship God - because they don't love Jesus.

The normal custom Jesus kept was that He went into the synagogue to teach. The synagogue came about either during or immediately after the Babylonian captivity. By this time, temple worship had become totally degenerated to complete meaninglessness. If there had been another evangelically correct place to worship, Jesus would have gone there. I can just picture some brethren standing up and yelling at Jesus to come out from among them and be separate. No, friends, Jesus is in this synagogue; and that's where I am staying - with Him! We must stay where we can bear testimony to the lost sheep for God. If you cannot bear testimony for God where you are at then, by all means, get out! But before you move you had better make CERTAIN the Spirit of God is moving you along – and NOT the spirit of self-will and selfish desire.

So many people are struggling to hang on to their faith and they know they have no useful testimony. They stay in a church where grandpa built the choir loft, or some land was donated at some point in years gone by from their family. Some have their names inscribed in a pew. When a place has departed from the faith you have no business being there – and that includes THIS Spiritual Safari, too, by the way! However, if we have a witness to give, we really need to hang around that place, because that is definitely the indication we are where God has chosen for us.

That account has filled in only one day of the “silent years of Jesus youth” we spoke about before. More accurately, we filled in one seventh of His life with that account. We don't know much about the other six days except that He was a carpenter. Well, when they handed Him the Book, He dove in at the most difficult Scripture there was: Isaiah! The Bible wasn't divided into chapters and verses at that time; but in your Bible it can easily be found....

Isaiah 61: 1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD ~

Jesus broke off the reading just before "...and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;" This is where Jesus closes the book and hands it back to the minister. Friends, are you with me? – Are you spiritually conscious and cognizant at all? Jesus doesn't even take it to the end of a complete sentence; there isn't even a comma where Jesus stops. Look closely to note the break is at the conjunctive – that's hilarious to me. Jesus looked into the eyes of His congregation that day right there and told them this Scripture was fulfilled; the omitted part won't be fulfilled until He returns. We have before us God's Own interpretation of Scripture. His is much better than most of the modern commentators. The day of vengeance has not come yet, friends. We live in a wonderful day in the anointing of the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel to the poor. Our mission is to preach the Gospel that poor sinners might be saved today....

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

~ Well, the wonder and amazement are spoiled as they reveal they have totally and completely missed the point - and this isn't Joseph's son, either. Too bad some smart man wasn't saying these things so they could believe him! Friends, we live in a mixed-up world; even the church world is about as backwards as it can get. How can this peasant carpenter possibly be the Messiah? That is the real underlying, unspoken question in the crowd. This is the first comprehensive example we have of Jesus taking upon Himself our humanity....

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

~ Let's meet two Gentiles from the future in our Spiritual Safari. This woman from Sarepta lives outside of the land of Israel. Naaman is a healed leprous captain in the army of the king of Syria. Both of these Gentiles came perilously close to missing the healing of God because they were reluctant to accepting God's way of doing things. Many were healed by Jesus, but many people missed that healing, too. Only those who came to Him were healed. That means they came to Him His way – on His terms – as SINNERS....

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

31 And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days.

~ We will report that as miracle number one for Jesus as He escaped from the mob. That was rough country up there, and this crowd was not happy with that sermon. They intended to silence this Man immediately, if not sooner - and permanently. By the time Jesus closed the book and handed it back to the priest they were literally seeing red. So, Jesus went down to Capernaum where He apparently set up headquarters, because His hometown would not have Him. In Matthew, and, especially in Mark, we have the account of this one day with Jesus. That will consume the remainder of this chapter. Many people say they would have loved to have spent a day with Jesus when He was here on earth during His ministry –

well, for those who are REALLY sincere; Luke is making that possible for us. These are the happenings of one busy Sabbath day in the life of the Lord Jesus....

32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

~ Jesus didn't speak as a scribe or a Pharisee, friends. There is a very real, profound life-changing power in His words. Christ taught with absolute and relentless authority. In this Gospel, we will take up the topic of demonism in a way in which we have not dealt with it before. We dabbled with it in Mark; but we're going to a séance in this Gospel. Demonism is alive and well, although it usually masquerades as little Jesus people. Satan worship is a reality. We were just told in Leviticus to make sure there is a difference between us and them – holy and unholy – clean and unclean; well, this would be why, friends. If no one can tell the difference between you and the world, then Satan just might have you all wrapped up – did you ever think about that? The appearance of demonism is a reality that is being played out everywhere in full force if you have a spiritually discerning eye. Jesus is going to cast out the demon here; and, as we go along, it will become awfully difficult to explain away the actions of bad people. I'm talking about the hard-core lawless man who does the unspeakable. They manifest the power of Satan, friends....

33 And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

38 And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

~ We have been to Simon Peter's house before, so we won't hang around very long this time. Notice this woman is always referred to as Simon's wife's mother? Wouldn't it be easier to say she was Peter's mother-in-law? Maybe I'm over-thinking things? Anyways, when Christ heals people, it isn't necessary to lead them off of the platform and take their picture for a support campaign or the religious newsletter. It doesn't take more than one attempt, either; and it doesn't happen gradually. His healing takes place immediately. It is amazing to me how much absurdity people will actually accept in the name of a religion.

Let's be perfectly clear: I believe in divine healing because there is no other kind. Any credible doctor will tell you they have no idea why some live and some die; same circumstances – one lives – one does not. It's not your faith or an individual that could heal you anyway – it's God! Sure, God uses the instrument of man and medicine – sometimes – sometimes not. Your healing may involve a doctor OR a casket! Turn that over in your minds a few times and write me back about that one. The Lord here is healing in a wonderful way! Surely Christ hath bore our grief and carried our sorrows. The nation Israel considers Jesus stricken and smitten of God and afflicted. That seems to be about normal for the church today, too. Jesus did not heal on the basis of faith as far as we can tell. It was strictly His compassion, mercy, grace and pity that cause Jesus to move on our behalf according to the Book we're learning from. We are told to bear one another's burden....

39 And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

40 Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent .

44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

~ Our Spiritual Safari sermon is deemed complete in this report as Jesus Himself has brought the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven to us. May God richly bless you; my beloved readers ~

]]