**GOD’S GOOD NEWS Luke 4:13-30 9th Jan 2022**

*Luke 4:14-30  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.  (16)  And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.  (17)  And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,  (18)  “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,  (19)  to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”  (20)  And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.  (21)  And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”  (22)  And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph's son?”  (23)  And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘“Physician, heal yourself.” What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.’”  (24)  And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.  (25)  But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land,  (26)  and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.  (27)  And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”  (28)  When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.  (29)  And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.  (30)  But passing through their midst, he went away.*

It felt like a strange and drawn out experience…

In 2002 we believed it was right to move back to South Australia

with our five children aged between 15 and 4.

We needed the support of our family who lived here

I had finished up in my Church in Geelong

And we had put out house on the market

But neither the house sold, nor a ministry opportunity presented itself here.

We came anyway and things started to change

Moving in with my sister in law while final conversations were had with a Church.

We began looking for a home.

But house prices in Adelaide were significantly more than Geelong

And it was rare to find a home with sufficient bedrooms for our large family.

Then miraculously we did.

I think it was a Tuesday we saw, and decided we had found the right house

But – well our house in Geelong still hadn’t sold

It was probably beyond our budget at the best of times

We had no money for a deposit

And it was up for Auction this coming Saturday!

It seemed impossible, until we found a particular mortgage broker.

We met on the Thursday, and were told she was hopeful.

Particularly as she was to have lunch with the bank manager on the Friday

And mid afternoon on that day we got the call!

Bridging finance had been secured, we could have a loan.

This was indeed good news!

But would it be enough?

The next day we attended the auction, along with the secretary of my new Church, someone to help with the bidding and even the Mortgage broker turned up.

Remarkably we were the only ones who wanted the property.

And when our offer fell below their reserve we faced an anxious wait as the vendors decided what to do.

After a long, long time we were approached by the real estate agent.

The owner liked us, were thrilled a family like us wanted the property

and was prepared to accept our offer.

This was indeed wonderfully good news! PAUSE

We all love a bit of good news.

But Good news can be a whole variety of things.

We had good news to say we could by a house,

And I had good news when I discovered my insurance covered some water damage in my property…

came out of surgery to remove a tumour near my brain…

and was rung by my son to say I had become a grandfather...

Good news comes in all shapes and sizes.

Mark tells us at the beginning of his book that he was writing of the good news about Jesus Christ

And Luke in today’s passages has Jesus reading from the Prophet Isaiah,

saying that he has come to bring… and is himself… the Good news… PAUSE

Now for most of us – good news is usually news that makes our lives better.

The relatives are coming to stay, the relatives are going home – at last!

I just got my first Job – I just retired from my last job!

I am about to go on the holiday of a lifetime – boy its good to come home!

I have heard it said the 2 best days of a man’s life are the day he buys a boat … and the day he sells it!

My guess is this could be said of many things.

Like the day we first bring our child home…

and the day our last child leaves home!

Both are good days!

Here in this passage Jesus tells us he has come to bring good news and helps us understand what it is.

And at the same time we see – that for many – this good news was very different from what they had been expecting or hoping for!

Take a moment to turn to someone nearby and tell them a piece of good news you received last year!

Talk about what made it good news!

So what are the factors that make something good news!?

COMMENT/RESPONSE (it is of benefit, Brings hope, Is positive, uplifting)

As followers of Jesus – the Gospel is foundational.

And as I am sure you aware – “Gospel” and “good news” mean the same thing.

But what is the Gospel?

When you think about the gospel – what is the good news that comes to mind?

Growing up - the gospel I heard talked about and understood was very simple…

My guess is it is similar to the one you understand…

Simply stated it goes something like this:- “We are forgiven, made in right relationships with God and have the promise of spending eternity in His presence. This is available for all as a free gift of God’s grace received by faith”

Now we may know this in a variety of forms.

I grew up with the “4 spiritual laws”…

* God loves you
* We messed up
* God sent Jesus to save…
* We receive through responding in repentance and belief…

Some of you may have heard or told the gospel in other ways

* 2 ways to live – with you in charge of your life – or God.
* Evangelism explosion the hand presentation
* Thumb – God’s free gift of Grace
* I am a Sinner
* God - merciful and just
* Person of Jesus – died and rose again to pay penalty of sin
* Saving faith – trusting in Jesus for eternal life
* Or perhaps it’s the bridge to life…I can share this with you after if you like.

The Gospel was simple, straightforward and easy to remember and repeat.

But then we come to a passage like today’s

As Jesus takes the reading from the Prophet Isaiah and declares that this prophecy is now fulfilled in him.

That HE IS God’s good news.

We begin to see that for Jesus the gospel is far more comprehensive,

more all-encompassing,

and more involved than we ever imagined … PAUSE

The reading from Isaiah began: *“****The Spirit of the Lord is on me****…”*

Now I have a sneaking suspicion that some of his listeners would have been around just a few weeks ago

They were there at the Jordan river when Jesus had come to be baptised.

They were the ones who had seen the*“ Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” (Luk 3:22)*

These are the ones whose interest would have piqued when Jesus began his reading: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me… 4:18*

And yet - just as Jesus could claim the Spirit’s presence and power - so can we.

Remember what John told us about Jesus appearance to his disciples after his resurrection: *Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”(Joh 20:21-23)*

God gives His Spirit to His Gospel people.

Like Jesus the Spirit of the Lord is on us.

We, like Jesus, are called, equipped and empowered to live and breathe…

To share this good news in all we do. PAUSE

SO… it is important to ask: What is this gospel and how is it good news?

Good news to us?

and to those we know?

So when Jesus reads: He has… *“Anointed me to preach good news to the poor*…

We immediately begin to see that it means, what it involves?

*proclaiming freedom for prisoners…*

*Recovery of sight for the blind…*

*Release the oppressed…*

*Proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour* PAUSE

But before we get to this, you may have noticed – that not everyone heard what Jesus said as good news.

Some spoke well of him and were amazed at his words

But others struggled to believe that this local boy, the son of our neighbour…

you know Joseph the carpenter…

That this lad we saw growing up – how could he be the embodiment of all that God had promised for his people!?

And they struggled with what he was suggesting.

That the poor, the blind, the criminals and those held captive…

that these people would be set free and put on an equal footing in society…

and before God…

That they, with us were to be a part of God’s new Kingdom community,

They would be included with the coming of His good news!

In fact they not only struggled with such a thought…

they were incensed by Jesus suggesting this as a possibility

They tried to dispose of him as a result

Attempting to throw him off a cliff!

And so it still is true!

Some people will struggle to hear the gospel as good news.

Many struggle to believe that they need God to release them from their enslavement to money or pursuit of happiness as the goal of life

That they are blind to the truth or oppressed by the expectations of others.

Or that it is only by surrendering to the living God, giving your life away…

that true life can be found!

But its not just those out there for whom this good news can be hard to hear.

It can even be hard for people like us!

The righteous, good, God fearing people

who are nice, kind, law abiding citizens and active members of the Church.

We too can struggle with the good news that God cares for the downtrodden,

the outcast, the prisoner, the unemployed, the same sex attracted,

the broken, the sinner – as much as he cares for me.

Even for those who don’t comply with our boarder restrictions!

That God loves all equally and it has nothing to do with who we are…

or how good we are!

For this is what the year of the Lord’s favour was all about!

Now the Jews were very familiar with this idea (read about it in Lev.25)

The “Year of Jubilee” was something God wanted his people to practice…

but they never did. It was too hard, to impractical, to confronting

Every fiftieth year Israel was to take the whole year off,

cancel all debts,

return all family property that had been sold

and generally be kind and generous to everyone…

even to the most undeserving amongst them.

This is what it meant to “Proclaim liberty throughout the land”

And it was everyone’s job for a whole year.

Now God instituted this for 2 reasons.

It was about justice and equity,

and it foreshadowed the good news Jesus came to bring

Every 50 years, everything would be reset and start from scratch – Incredible idea!

Justice and mercy perfectly fulfilled!

But completely impractical!.

All savings and accumulated wealth was meant to be shared

and all of God's people, the whole nation, would have equal access to everything.

It was a way of achieving social equity.

Everyone would start over again on the basis of God's provision.

No one would be left out, overlooked or mistreated

All were included, all welcomed, all recipients of God’s abundant grace.

But can you imagine it today!?

Everyone pools all their money, their shares, their superannuation, their houses…

puts it all into single bucket and then it is redistributed evenly.

Utopia – no more people who were dispossessed, or treated differently because they

were rich or famous.

No more people who couldn’t afford basic health care, housing or education…

no more people who owned more than many countries of the world and had

political privileges and powers the rest of us could only dream of…

All equal. All with equal rights and opportunities

Absolute bliss – but absolutely impossible!

Because – after all it would be so unfair!

All that we worked for, deserved – its ours!

Ours to keep and ours to do with as we like!

And here is the problem.

For many of us the Gospel God is on about…

Is challenging, confronting, upsetting!

But to those of us who know our need

To the blind, the imprisoned, the captive…

The good news Jesus brings – is the most amazing news you have ever heard!

Listen to what Jesus says in chapter 6 of Luke: *“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets. “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. “Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets. (Luk 6:20-26)*

This is the gospel!

The good news of the coming of God to rule and reign.

For things on earth to be as they are in Heaven.

And this is what Jesus achieved!

Jesus came to release the oppressed

To free prisoners

To give sight to the blind

To include everyone – whoever they are and whatever they have done…

equally into God’s family.

Its why we as a Church actively partner with Baptist World Aid in Cambodia

Because ensuring sufficient food, education and health care to the worlds poorest is a proclamation of God’s good news

It is why we as a Church have employed Ross to head up Grange Life

Because walking alongside the isolated and marginalised of this community

People struggling with disability, or mental health challenges…

is a proclamation of the gospel.

It’s why we as a Church run Alpha, and encourage you to share your faith with and pray for your neighbours and friends – because helping people understand how they can be in a relationship with the Living God is a proclamation of God’s good news.

It is why we as a Church include children and families into our services - with all the mess, noise and delight they bring.

It is why we provide hearing assistance for those who find the noise distracting

It’s why we live stream our services for those who are unable to attend

It’s why we provide our facilities for use of all who are connected with the Church, irrespective of whether we see them here on Sunday mornings.

These are all expressions of the reality that the gospel is God’s good news for all.

The Good news that Jesus proclaimed!

PAUSE

I want you to take a few moments now and list a few people you know and love.

Family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues… Include yourself if you need some god news to.

Just name 3, perhaps from 3 areas of your life.

Now ask.

1. What good news do they need to hear? (How is the coming of Jesus good news to them?)
2. How can you or us be an instrument of God’s good news they need?

Share this with someone

I will lead you in prayer.