

J.J.

**THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR**  
**Luke 4:16-20**

**INTRODUCTION :**

You are familiar with the term B.C. and A.D. We are now in A.D. 2022. B.C. means Before Christ. But A.D. doesn't mean After Death. A.D. means "Anno Domini" which means "the year of our Lord". It's taken from the full original full phrase "anno Domini nostri Jesu Christi" which translates, "in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This was devised in 525 A.D. by Dionysius but was widely used in the year 800 A.D. and adopted by the U.N. for the international communication. Before that, the new year started on August 29.

Anyway, what it shows that the life of Jesus Christ is the turning point in world history.

**Application : If Jesus is the turning point of world history – the turning point from the old to the new, then Jesus can be the turning point of your life today.** What I mean by that is that to some of you, you had a very trying and challenging year. This year can be a turning point if you put your faith in the Lord. That's what our Lord does. Has 2020 and 2021 been a tiring year for you? Then our Lord is calling you back to Him and make this year a turning point for you.

**Today, we'll answer by God's grace, "How to have God's favor in your life"**

*Luke 4: 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."*

**PRAY**

**Background :**

*And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up.*

- Nazareth is where he was brought up. He grew up in Nazareth. It's a small town so everyone knew who he is. Some of them might be their playmates, his neighbours and etc.

*And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day,*

- Synagogue was a place where the Jews listen for the Scriptures to be read and preached.

**Application :** *And as was his custom* I love it that even the Son of God Himself goes REGULARLY ONCE A WEEK, to a place where the Word of God is preached. What a good example for us to follow.

*and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.*

- That passage which Jesus read came from Isaiah 61:1-2
- They were inside a synagogue which means Jews were the ones hearing this.
- They understand that this passage is talking about the coming Messiah or Saviour, one who will save them. The Jews were waiting for this Saviour that comes directly from God.

**TIE IT :** Now remember, He was in Nazareth, a small town, everyone knew him intimately, how he grew up, who his parents were, his occupation, his playmates and etc and then he says to them,

*21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

Which means, "I am the Messiah being talked about by the prophet Isaiah. I am the one you

have been waiting for. I am Your Saviour!" **IMAGINE THE REACTION OF THE PEOPLE THERE.**

We'll talk about that later.

**But before we talk about that, let's discuss, what is the purpose of our Jesus Christ as the Saviour!**

*18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,*

*because he has anointed me* (chrio – where we get Christos, anointed one, where we get Christ)

*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.*

**IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO RECEIVE THE LORD'S FAVOUR, WE NEED TO KNOW WHO DID JESUS CAME FOR?**

### **1. Christ came for the poor.**

*to proclaim good news to the poor.*

**Etymology :** poor "ptochos"; it is literally a beggar, there's another word for poor in Greek which is "penichros" which means someone who has little resources. But this one is "ptochos" which means a person who literally has nothing, who needs to beg in order for him to eat. Someone who is powerless and helpless.

Of course, our Lord is not talking about a person who is economically poor but one who is spiritually poor. (Although, a person who is economically poor will have a tendency to follow Christ more than a person who is wealthy, that's why Jesus said, "It's easier for a camel to enter the kingdom of heaven than a rich person." But that's another topic.) A person who is spiritually poor is someone who realizes that he or she has nothing to offer to God.

That's why Jesus said,

*Matthew 5:3 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Our Lord did not come to save those who think they are good enough to enter heaven. Our Lord came to save those who realize that they are sinners and have nothing to offer God.

Isaiah said

*Isaiah 64:6 We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags.*

The Bible says in Romans 3:10-12

*10 as it is written:*

*"None is righteous, no, not one;*

*11 no one understands;*

*no one seeks for God.*

*12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;*

*no one does good,*

*not even one."*

**Illustration :** A theology professor was asked, "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

The professor answered, "I don't know since the Bible says, there is no one good, not even one."

**So if you think, you are a good person, then you are starting on the wrong foot my friend.**

Maybe you think you are good because you are better than others when it comes to your behaviour and lifestyle but Jesus told this story about the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:9-14

Both of them went into the temple to pray and here's what the Pharisee said,

*Matthew 18:11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'* (Note : these aren't bad and our Lord is saying not to do this but the problem is, he was comparing himself with other men and thinking by doing this he gains favor with the Lord.)

**But here's what the tax collector did and said while praying,**

*13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'*

**What did Jesus say about this?**

*14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*

**APPLICATION : WHO ARE YOU IN THIS STORY? ARE YOU THE PHARISEE WHO THINKS HE'S GOOD ENOUGH BEFORE GOD BECAUSE HE COMPARES HIS OWN LIFE WITH OTHER PEOPLE OR ARE YOU THE TAX COLLECTOR, WHO CANNOT EVEN LIFT UP HIS EYES TO GOD?**

**EXPOUND ON PTOCHOS :** You know that word “ptochos”, it means a beggar who is so ashamed at his situation because he's so poor that he's crouched in a corner with his one hand up and his other hand covering his face because he's so ashamed.

This is a picture of a sinner, someone who is spiritually poor and knows he can't offer anything to God. Jesus said,

*to proclaim good news to the poor.*

**Jesus said, I came here for you and I will fill you up. I will make give you satisfaction.**

## **2. Christ came for the prisoner**

*proclaim liberty to the captives*

**Our Lord is not talking about actual prisoners here.** He is talking about people who are in spiritual bondage. These are the people who are so deep in sin that they can't find a way to get out of it.

What is your spiritual bondage?

- Is it pride? (Pride is comparing yourself to others)
- Is it hatred, bitterness or unforgiveness?
- Is it your temper?
- Is it that you worry too much? Or fear?
- Is it lust? Is it pornography? Is it homosexuality?
- Is it greed or love of money?

**If you realize that you are in spiritual bondage and you want to get out of it, CHRIST SAID,**  
*proclaim liberty to the captives*

**Etymology:** aphesis “release”

- First, it means forgiveness.

Christ came in order to take the punishment for our sins so you can be released from it.

- Second, it means, I will give you freedom from sin, from the spiritual bondage

***Galatians 5:1 So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law. (NLT)***

**How do we get ourselves free from the spiritual bondage of sinning, it is not by following the law, it is by walking with our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Quote :** Christ has forgiven us from the penalty of sin and freed us from the power of sin.

**That's why Jesus says,**

*John 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

**But it starts with admitting to our Lord**, "Lord I am in bondage with this sin, please free me from this."

**3. Christ came for the blind**  
recovering of sight to the blind,

**Spiritually blind people are those who do not see the truth.**

*John 12:40, "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn and be healed,"*

*Isaiah 29:10 For the Lord has poured over you a spirit of deep sleep, He has shut your eyes,*

**A person cannot also see the truth because Satan has blinded them**

*2 Corinthians 4:4 Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. (NLT)*

**But our Lord came to give sight to the spiritually blind. But we must be like the blind man who called out to Jesus.**

In Luke 18, Jesus was drawing near Jericho and there was this blind man who is also a beggar sitting by the road and the blind man knew that Jesus is coming.

*Luke 18: 38 And he cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

But the people around him was rebuking him and asking him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

**So our Lord stopped and asked him.**

*41 "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me recover my sight." 42 And Jesus said to him, "Recover your sight; your faith has made you well." 43 And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God.*

**Do you really want to see the truth? Jesus said,**

*John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

**It all starts with knowing who Jesus is. To know Jesus is to know the truth.**

**WHAT IS THE MEANING OF TRUTH? TRUTH MEANS REALITY, WHAT TRULY IS.**

To understand better, we can understand through analogy and opposites

**Analogy :** Even if you describe to a person who was born blind what the colors of the rainbows are and how beautiful it is, he will not really understand it, until he sees it. Then he can understand what you mean.

**The same with a person if I describe to him that Jesus is God and saved you from sins, he will not understand me because that person is spiritually blind.** Our Lord has to open their eyes first to see that truly Jesus is the Son of God. But Jesus can only open their eyes if they believe that He is the Saviour. But it all starts with calling out to the Lord and believing in Him.

**Opposite :** The opposite of truth is a lie.

A person who knows Jesus will follow the truth.

**Example :** The devil will put in our minds different kinds of lies e.g.

Lie : God will not provide for you.

Don't believe this lie. Always believe the truth which is in God's Word, where He says, "*My God shall provide all your needs according to His riches and glory. (Phil 4:19)*

Lie : God will not take care of you.

**Truth :** *Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)*

**4. Christ came for the burdened  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,**

**An oppressed person is a person as described by John MacArthur,**

"someone overwhelmed by the pain of life, overwhelmed by relationships that are abusive, overwhelmed by illness, overwhelmed by whatever kind of troubles life can bring to bear"

**That person is so oppressed, burdened or stress and that person has lost all joy.  
Christ said, I have come to set them free from it.**

**APPLICATION :** Are you that person who is so overwhelmed by broken relationships, abused, overwhelmed by sickness or trials and suffering? Or by sin?

**What did Jesus say?**

*Matthew 11: 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

**Christ came for the poor and the prisoner, for the blind and the burdened.**

And He said, *19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

**Etymology :** "favor" dektos from dechomai which means you are accepted, to receive, to have access

**God is saying, I sent my son Jesus Christ because I want you to have access, to receive my power, my love, my care, my forgiveness, my blessings and my joy.**

**WRAPPING IT ALL UP**

## **How do you receive God's favor?**

**Let's see how our Lord explained it in the following verses.**

*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?"*

**In short, they did not believe him.** So our Lord explained further

*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."*

**Explanation :**

**You can find the story of the widow in 1 Kings 17:7-16**

There was famine in the land and God said to Elijah to go to this widow. What's the situation of the widow?

*1 Kings 17: 11 And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." 12 And she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die."*

*And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth.'"*

REMEMBER, THIS WAS HER LAST FLOUR!!! And Elijah was even asking her to share it with him. But she believed and obeyed and look at verses 15-16

*15 And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. 16 The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.*

*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."*

**For Naaman the Syrian, you can find it 2 Kings 5:1-14**

To summarize, Naaman was a great and noble soldier and not a believer of God and he had leprosy and his wife heard about this prophet Elisha who is a prophet of God and said he can help you. But Elisha wanted him to go into this dirty river and go down seven times.

Remember, Naaman was a man of dignity and nobility. So at first, he did not want to do it and even said,

*2 Kings 5: 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went off in a rage.*

**In short, he was saying,** "This is humiliating. Why should I wash in this dirty river in enemy territory when there are clean rivers in my area."

**But Naaman's servant talked to him and said,**

*13 Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed'!"*

"Remember he said, if you do it you will be healed of your leprosy." You'd rather have leprosy than dunk yourself into this river? Your choice.

So Naaman came into his senses and got healed.

### **How do you receive God's favor through His Son?**

**Remember, earlier the story of the blind man earlier and the story of the tax collector, the widow and Naaman.** They were all desperate people and know that their only recourse is to TRUST THE LORD!

**A good quote from Corrie Ten Boom,**

"You can never learn that Christ is all you need, until Christ is all you have."

**Are you still relying on yourself, your intelligence, your job, are you depending on Jesus Christ.**

**Every January 9**, our family has made it a point to remember and celebrate what we call GODependence Day. That's the day, we literally HAD NOTHING, and not even knowing the future and all we had was Christ and He delivered us through.

**Again, remember, the favour of the Lord are on the ones who know they are**

*to proclaim good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to captives*

*and recovering of sight to the blind,*

*to set at liberty those who are oppressed,*

**THE PERSON WHO RECEIVES GOD'S FAVOUR ARE THE ONES WHO KNOW THEY ARE NOTHING WITHOUT THE LORD AND WHO OFFERS EVERYTHING TO THE LORD.**

**Last week :** We talked putting our full trust in the Lord. And those who put their full trust in the Lord are the ones I mentioned above and in return, they receive the Lord's favor.

**Look at what our Lord Jesus Christ said :**

*John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

**ILLUSTRATION : THE DOOR OF THE HUMILITY**

This is one of the oldest church structure in the world. It's called the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The church sits over a cave where according to tradition, it's the place where Jesus was born.

The door is only four feet tall and two feet wide. In order to enter it, you have to bow down to go through it.

It's the same when it comes to getting the favor of the Lord, we are so desperate and we realize that Jesus is Lord that we need to bow down before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

**Because here's what the Bible says :**

*James 4:6 "God opposes the proud but favors the humble."*

**S.G.D.**