

The Lord's Gracious Salvation

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and according to His custom He entered on the Sabbath day into the synagogue and stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me to announce the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of Jubilee." And when He rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant, He sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. And all bore witness to Him and marveled at the words of grace . . .

(Luke 4:16-22)

The Year of Jubilee

The Lord referred to "the acceptable year of the Lord." This denotes the jubilee described in Leviticus 25. The year of jubilee was a time when slaves were released and property was returned to the rightful owners. Hence, the year of jubilee was a year of release, freedom, and return of lost property. Those who had been sold into slavery were released during the year of jubilee.

Announcing the Gospel to the Poor

Why did the Lord begin His ministry proclaiming the jubilee of grace? What happened to us in our fallen life? We lost our birthright, sold ourselves into captivity, and became slaves. We lost everything, including our birthright and our status.

All today are born poor. This poverty does not refer to the lack of possessions, but to the lack of God's presence, of God's blessing, of life and peace, and of eternal life. In the Lord's eyes, we are all absolutely poor, without anything.

The good news was to be preached to the poor, that is, to the poor in heavenly, spiritual, and divine things. This is the first item of the Lord's gracious words telling us that the gospel is to be preached to the poor.

All fallen people have lost their right to enjoy Christ and have sold themselves to negative things. But the year of jubilee indicates that we can be released from bondage and recover the right to enjoy Christ as our portion.

Release to the Captives

The captives of old were those who were sold into slavery. They were in bondage until the year of release – the year of Jubilee.

Today, spiritually speaking, we were all born as captives. Our forefathers were captured by Satan. From birth each person is in bondage to another power. The apostle Paul referred to this as the reigning power of sin.

The Lord's gracious gospel tells us that as captives we can be released. The Lord Jesus, as the Son of God, was manifested to destroy the works of the devil on the

cross. He can dispel the power of the devil and release the captured ones from all bondage by His reigning life.

Recovery of Sight to the Blind

We were also all born blind, not able to see or understand the things of God. We did not know God, the meaning of human life, the origin of the universe, or the destiny of man.

Praise the Lord that the gracious gospel includes the recovery of sight. This is because the Lord is light. He is the One who shines upon the eyes of our heart to enable us to know God and come to the full knowledge of the truth.

Liberty to the Oppressed

The Greek word translated "oppressed" comes from a verb meaning to break in pieces (Matt. 12:20). Those who are oppressed are those oppressed under Satan in sickness or in sin (Luke 13:11-13; John 8:34). Today oppressions can be realized in many ways; in family, business, education, and sickness. Psychological oppressions come from dissatisfaction of the heart, restlessness, unhappiness, uneasiness, and bondage. Some are oppressed in their conscience by guilt and are afraid of death and God's judgment. No one is free from oppression.

Hallelujah – the oppressed can be set free! The Lord can heal our sickness and bear the burden of our weakness and sufferings. He is the One who also bore the burden for our sin and judgment so that we can have peace with God.

Conclusion

From the time of the fall of Adam human history has been one of poverty (being without God), captivity (bondage to sin), blindness (darkness and ignorance), and oppression (sickness and dissatisfaction). But now in Christ we have the glad tidings of blessing, release, sight, and acceptance before God. This is the gracious gospel of salvation. This is the real jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord.

(Adapted from the Life-Study of Luke.)