

Jesus' Mission Statement

Luke 4:18-19 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He anointed Me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent Me to **proclaim** release to captives,
And **recovery** of sight to the blind,
To **set free** those who are oppressed,
¹⁹ To **proclaim** the favorable year of the Lord.”

Isaiah 61:1-2

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
Because the Lord anointed me
To bring good news to the humble;
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, (missing in Luke 4:18 in NASB, not in NKJV or KJV)
To proclaim release to captives
And freedom to prisoners;
² To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord

Introduction

(Ask the congregation to write down “**He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted**”—Isaiah 61:1—right after ‘to bring good news to the poor in verse 18).

As pastor of this congregation, I pray daily for your salvation. I pray to the Lord saying, “Remember us in your salvation, and do not lose any single one of us.” Daily I remind myself too of who I am before the LORD and what I am called to do as shepherd of God’s flock at MUMC. My mission is to feed God’s flock with God’s truth and lead them into eternal life. My goal is to assist you to arrive securely in Heaven.

Daily I also remind myself of the Church’s mission so that we may not lose focus. What are we called for? What is our mission in the world? What does the LORD require of us to do as God’s Church? To stay focused on God’s call, many pastors and churches do the same as I do, and they have written their own mission statements.

There was a time when all ministers and congregations were urged to develop their vision or mission statement. So did I with my previous congregation. Mine was, and still is, *To realize God’s Kingdom in every heart, every family, and every community.* MUMC also has written one with Pastor Clark. Did you know that Jesus also had a mission statement for His ministry?

This morning, I am going to introduce to you the mission statement of our Lord Jesus Christ that was written in Luke 4:18-19. I hope and pray that we stay faithful to Christ's mission statement and practice thereof as Jesus did.

Content

One day, Jesus was in His hometown Nazareth. He went to the synagogue. He stood up to read and the attendant brought Him the scroll of Prophet Isaiah. Jesus unrolled the scroll and read Isaiah 61:1-2 (same as today's text, Luke 4:18-19). After Jesus read the passage, He sat down saying, *"Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."* With that, He officially launched His public ministry and went out to preach the gospel saying, *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel"* (Mark 1:15).

Christ's Five-fold Mission: His mission statement is simple: *to bring good news to the poor.* And the good news, the good tidings, comprises five things: 1) Bind up the broken hearted. 2) Proclaim the liberty to the captives. 3) Recover sight to the blind. 4) Set free those who are oppressed. 5) Proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

For the next three years, Christ ministered to the poor and the afflicted, the broken-hearted, the captives, and the oppressed with His gospel message. He set them free with His healing and truth. He restored their broken relationship with God. He gave them the hope of eternal life. The same groups of people are still with us today. They still need to hear the good news from God. They are our target audience. We are the messengers. We have a message to bring that is forever relevant and true: Christ sets people free from the bondage of sin and death. Christ sets them free from the devil's oppression.

Let me guide you through Christ's mission statement verse by verse as it appears in today's text.

Verse 18 a: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to bring **good news to the poor.***

Good News: the LORD God has anointed Jesus His beloved Son with His Spirit with a purpose: to bring good news to the poor. Christ is the good news to the world. The best news to the people. He is good news of great joy to all people. He is God's power. He is God's wisdom. He is God's grace. He is the Living Water. He grants us life, freedom, truth, love, grace, and wisdom.

The Poor: The original Hebrew word for 'the poor' is also translated as "the afflicted, the humble, and the weak." So, the Lord God sent good news to the afflicted, the humble, the poor, and the weak in the world. Jesus was so fully aware of God's tender heart and intention for the poor that His teaching, the Sermon on the Mount, begins with the poor in mind. Here's Matthew 5:1-3: *He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples*

came to Him. ² And He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying, “**Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** Indeed, blessed are the poor and the afflicted, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. To them, Jesus brought good news. To them, so should we, His Church.

Bind up the Brokenhearted: In the original Hebrew text of Isaiah 61:1, there is another important verse for us to remember (which was omitted in Luke—KJV and NKJV has it, though): *He has sent me to **bind up the brokenhearted.*** The brokenhearted are the people whose heart is smashed, shattered, and broken. They are battered, abused, bruised, or wounded, either physically or emotionally. Think about it: God sent Jesus to reach out to those afflicted to bind up their broken hearts. E.g., Jesus bound up the broken heart of a widow mother in Nain (Luke 7:11-15). Psalm 147:3 says, *He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.* God reaches out to those afflicted to bind up their broken hearts. So did Jesus. So should the Church of Christ. We are called to bind up the heart of broken people.

One More Note on the Poor: Whenever we hear about the poor among us, we tend to think of some type of ministry to help them with food or finances. All good. But let us not forget the ministry priorities here. Helping the poor is necessary, but it is not the primary task of the Church. The salvation message is. The Church is the only place where the poor can hear the gospel message. Where else can they hear about Christ’s atonement on their behalf? We ought not to confuse the Church’s main mission with something secondary: For instance, soup kitchen or food pantry is not Church’s main reason for existence. The preaching of the gospel message is. That’s why some Christian inner-city homeless shelters always share the gospel message first before they serve the meal.

Verse 18 b: *He has sent Me to **proclaim release** to captives, And **recovery of sight** to the blind,...* Look at the action verb here: to **proclaim**. It is to declare. It is to read aloud. It is to announce in public. No messenger whispers the message of the King. They read it to the crowd in the town square. Same goes with the gospel message. The Church of God is called to proclaim the good news of Christ outside, not inside the church walls.

Let’s think about the content of the gospel message. What is the message of God to proclaim? First, release the captives.

Release (רָדַד—‘De-ror’— in Hebrew). Proclaim liberty to captives, God commands. Tell captives that they are free in Christ. The root of the Hebrew word ‘to release’ has the meaning of ‘free running, horse swiftly galloping, or giving light.’ To the people in the world, the Church is to proclaim the message of release from sin and death so that all of them may be set free in Christ. E.g., My personal experience of the gospel message in one word is freedom.

The same word for release in Greek (ἀφεις—‘ah-phe-i-s’) also carries the meaning of ‘pardon, cancellation of guilt, and forgiveness.’ Christ proclaimed the message of forgiveness through His own death on the cross. Today, too many people including believers still remain

captive under unforgiving spirit. If you still hold grudge against someone and haven't forgiven that person, you are holding that person captive under guilt. Sadly, you, too, are a captive in the dungeon of unforgiveness yourself. The Church's mission is to proclaim and demonstrate the message of forgiveness so that those who are under the bondage of unforgiving spirit may be released from their chains. E.g., The Amish community forgave the perpetrator in a school shooting in Nickel Mines, PA (2006). The release of captives in Jesus' name.

Recovery of Sight to the Blind: This was literally practiced by Jesus. In His healing ministry, He would open the eyes of the blind. The Hebrew phrase in Isaiah also carries the meaning of 'to bring light to those who sit in a dark prison dungeon.' So that, once released, they can see the bright daylight. Charles Wesley was inspired by this verse and penned the following words that later turned into a hymn #363: *And Can It Be That I Should Gain*. Verse 4: *Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night; thine eye diffused a quickening ray; I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; my chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed thee. My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed thee.* Amen. Christ brings out the captive into the light.

Verse 18 b: *To set free those who are **oppressed**,*

Consider the word 'oppressed' here. Many people in the world today are oppressed. In the Church as well. You may think of political oppression, but it can be any type of oppression: emotional, spiritual, financial, and even physical. The Bible points out to the physical illness as oppression by the devil. Peter the Apostle witnessed to Jesus' healing ministry saying, "*He went about doing good and healing all who were **oppressed by the devil...***" (Acts 10:38). Our spiritual enemy, the devil, oppresses people in various forms including physical sickness. Let me tell you a story of woman in the Bible.

Until Jesus healed her, she suffered from a 'spinal problem' caused by the devil for 18 years. Pay attention to what Jesus said about the woman's health condition. Luke 13:10-16. ¹⁰ Now Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹ And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness **caused by a spirit**; and she was bent over double, and could not straighten up at all. ¹² When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are **freed** from your sickness." ¹³ And He laid His hands on her; and immediately she stood up straight again, and began glorifying God. ¹⁴ But the synagogue leader, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, "There are six days during which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day." ¹⁵ But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites, does each of you on the Sabbath not untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it away to water it? ¹⁶ And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom **Satan has bound for eighteen long years**, should she not have been **released from this restraint** on the Sabbath day?" Satan has bound her eighteen long years, and Jesus released her from her suffering. Satan binds. Jesus releases. Those who are oppressed by the devil shall be released in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's move on to the last verse.

Verse 19: *To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.*" Jesus came here to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. 'The favorable year of the Lord' is commonly known as Jubilee: "So you shall consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a **jubilee** for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family" (Leviticus 25:10). It is the year when all the debts are forgiven, and the land was returned to its owner. It is the year of release. The year of return. The year of new beginnings. Likewise, in Christ all things are new. All things return to where they should be as God intends. Our relationships, our finances, and our walk with the Lord: *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come* (2 Corinthians 5:17). In Christ, we can have a brand-new life. For that, Christ came to us. The Church, the body of Christ, ought to proclaim the same message of restoration: Jubilee, the favorable year of the Lord.

Conclusion

Remember Christ's ministry started with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Until He was anointed with the Spirit, Christ waited. Same is true with the Church. It is one thing that the Church proclaims the gospel message to the world. But, without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, without the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, without His wonders and signs confirming our message, the message cannot be powerful as it should be. Without the Spirit working with us, we cannot carry out His mission effectively. So, let us pray for the anointing of the Holy Spirit among us first, then we go out and proclaim the gospel to the world. May God help us. Amen.