

Commentary on Luke chapter 4, by Chuck Smith 6.19.22

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June memory verse Romans 6:14&15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

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And Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit returned from Jordan ([Luk 4:1](#)),

Now He was at Jordan where He was baptized by John, and He returned from Jordan.

and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness ([Luk 4:1](#)),

Now the Judean wilderness stretches from an area just fifteen miles north of Jericho, and continues on down to the Dead Sea. And it extends back to what are known as the Jerusalem Hills, and it is a very barren, desolate area known as the Judean wilderness. There is about an average of one inch of rain a year. It oftentimes gets up to 120, 125 degrees there in that Judean wilderness.

And Jesus went into the wilderness.

Forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did not eat anything: [so forty days fasting] and when they were ended, he afterward hungered ([Luk 4:2](#)).

So Jesus had been fasting, going without food for forty days. And now He was hungry. Which means that He was beginning to starve to death.

And so the devil said to him, If thou be the Son of God ([Luk 4:3](#)),

And in the Greek, the *if* is in the subjunctive, rather than in the indicative case. And the *if* in the subjunctive is not a question, but is a declaration, "Since thou art the Son of God". He isn't really questioning the fact if Jesus is the Son of God or not, but he is in reality saying, "Since thou art the Son of God,"

command this stone that it be made bread ([Luk 4:3](#)).

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Use your divine gifts to satisfy the needs of your own flesh. A common temptation for men who have been gifted by God or placed in positions of authority or power by God, use God's gift to you, for your own benefit, for the benefit of your own flesh, to enrich yourself. And there are always those who, unfortunately, succumb to that temptation of the prostituting of their gifts that God has given to them, as they use them for their own benefit, rather than for the blessing of the entire body of Christ.

Satan is suggesting to Jesus that He do this, that the material is superior, the most important. But Jesus denied that suggestion with a word of God, declaring,

It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone ([Luk 4:4](#)),

The material life is not the most important.

but every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God ([Luk 4:4](#)).

Now all the way through Jesus emphasized and declared that the spiritual was superior to the material. This is the declaration of the New Testament, that the spiritual life is more important than, and superior to the material life. And this is the challenge that the world is giving us today in humanism, declaring that the material life is superior. And that is why the church and humanism lock horns. Because the true church of Jesus Christ must affirm the same message that Jesus declared, and that is, the spiritual is supreme. Humanism says the material is supreme. So the battle rages. But this is the declaration that Jesus made. The superiority of the spiritual over the physical realm.

Satan here was declaring the superiority of the physical over the spiritual. Take the spiritual and make something physical out of it. Take the spiritual power, and take that stone and make it bread, so you can feed yourself. You are hungry. And Jesus said, "Look, man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." The superiority of the spiritual over the material.

So the devil took him up to a high mountain, and showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time ([Luk 4:5](#)).

So before His eyes flash the kingdoms of the world. He saw Caesar sitting on the throne in Rome. He saw all of the power that world rulership brought. All of the honor, all of the glory. He saw the servants as they bowed and as they brought the delicacies. And He saw the people as he had the audience before him. Saw the power that he wielded from the throne.

And Satan said unto Jesus, All this power will I give to you, and the glory of them: for it's been delivered unto me ([Luk 4:6](#));

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When was it delivered unto him? It was delivered unto to him in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve sinned against the commandment of the Lord. They forfeited the earth to Satan. The Bible says, "Know ye not that whomsoever you yield yourself servants to obey, his servants you become. Whether obedience unto righteousness, or of disobedience unto sin. Yield therefore your members as instruments unto God, unto righteousness." But in yielding to Satan's suggestions, in obeying the suggestion of Satan, they were disobeying the command of God, and they yielded and forfeited the earth, which God had given to them, over to Satan. And Satan took control of the earth, as man yielded to his power, to his control, to his suggestion.

You see, in the beginning the world was God's; He made it. But when God created men and placed men on the earth, God gave the earth to men. God said to Adam, "Have dominion over the earth, over the fish in the sea, the fowls in the air, over every moving and creeping thing, for I have given it unto thee" ([Genesis 1:28](#)). So God gave to men this beautiful gift of the earth. And at that time it was beautiful.

But men in his folly and in yielding to Satan forfeited over unto Satan the world. And man in turn became a slave. A slave of Satan. And so Paul the apostle said, "In times past you all walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, that even now is directing the children of disobedience" ([Ephesians 2:2](#)). Satan is in control of the world. We sing, "This is my Father's world, and to my listening ear, all nature sings and... the music of the spheres." But in reality, this is Satan's world. He is telling that to Jesus. In fact, if you will study carefully, we will realize that the purpose of the 2ⁿ coming of Jesus Christ is to redeem the world back to God. To bring it back into God's sphere. Because men had forfeited it to Satan, now God is seeking to bring it back into His sphere, and for this purpose He sent His Son to redeem the world.

Now as we look at the world today, we do not yet see the redemption. We still see a world that is in rebellion against God. And we see the effects of that rebellion in our society. And it is totally wrong for men to blame God for the calamities of our world, which calamities have resulted entirely from men's rebellion against God ruling over the world. Yes, the world is in a mess. Yes, horrible things happen. Yes, there are things that we can't explain or understand, especially in the light of God's love. But we can understand them in the light of the world under the control of Satan, being governed and directed by Satan.

Now Jesus did not dispute Satan's claim when Satan said, "Look, it's mine, it's been given to me, it's been delivered to me, and I can give it to whomever I will." Jesus didn't dispute that; He recognized that fact. In fact, He knew that was true, and that's what He had come for, is to wrest it from Satan. By redeeming the world by going to the cross, and dying to pay the price of redemption. The price of redemption was that of shedding the blood. And He was going to go to the cross to redeem the world. And that was

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God's plan of the redemption of the world and man. It's through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Now what Satan is actually suggesting here is that Jesus can escape the cross. "You don't have to take God's plan. You don't have to take the path that God has designed to redeem. I'll make a deal with you, I'll give it to you right now, without the cross. Only one little hitch, bow down and worship me."

Of course, Jesus, had He bowed down to worship him, would then have been subservient also to Satan, and it would still be in his power. He would still be the one in control, because He would have bowed down to him. "Submit to my authority, I give it all to you. You can sit on the throne, you can rule, but you be under my authority, having bowed down to me."

And Jesus answered:

it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve ([Luk 4:8](#)).

Now, that the world is still under the control of Satan is evident by the fact that in the book of Revelation in chapter 13, when the man of sin, the beast comes on the scene, Satan will give to him his power and his throne. And we read that the antichrist will rule over the world. Satan still has the power of dispensing the world ruling powers to those whom he pleases. "I can give it to whomever I will." God allows him, of course, but yet, Satan has still tremendous power and will turn the world over to the antichrist. But then Jesus will come with the title deed to the earth, and will declare, "The kingdoms of this world have now become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Messiah, and He shall reign for ever and ever, as king of kings, and Lord of Lords, forever and ever, and ever Hallaluja, Hallaluja, Amen" ([Revelation 11:15](#)).

That has not yet happened. I am personally convinced that it is not far off. I believe that man has sunk about as low as God will allow him to sink. I really believe that the time has come in the history of mankind that God must once again intervene. God has intervened in history before. He intervened at the tower of Babel. When the technology of men had increased to the extent that God said anything he wants to do, he is capable of doing. And we are again arriving at that type of technology. God intervened in at the time of Noah, when there was a tremendous advancement in the powers given unto men through occult forces. We are coming to that again. Time for intervention.

So Satan is laying before Jesus an extremely powerful temptation. Something extremely desirable. Something that He was willing to die for. But Satan is saying, "You don't have to die for it. I give it to you, just bow down and worship me."

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The third temptation was at the pinnacle at the temple, where Satan suggested that He jump. And now Satan takes to quoting the scripture.

It is written, He will give his angels charge over thee ([Luk 4:10](#)),

He leaves out an important part. "To keep thee in all thy ways." He omits that. So he is quoting only half of the scripture. Which he is a master in doing. Leaving out some of the salient points. It is written, "He will give His angels charge over thee,"

to bear thee up, lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone ([Luk 4:11](#)).

"If you're the Son of God, go head and jump." And the idea being, by jumping off of this high pinnacle of the temple and landing in that crowd of people down below, completely unharmed, soft landing. "The people by the spectacular demonstration of power will surely know that you're the Messiah. And they will stand in awe of wonder of you."

And Jesus said, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God ([Luk 4:12](#)).

So when the devil had ended all of the temptation, he departed from him for a season ([Luk 4:13](#)).

He came back, but for a while he left Him.

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit ([Luk 4:14](#))

Now He began in chapter 4, full of the Holy Spirit, and being led by the Spirit. And now returning in the power of the Spirit. And so that work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus, leading Him, filling Him, empowering Him. And we as believers have that same privilege of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Being led by the Holy Spirit, and being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Paul said, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be ye being filled with the Spirit" ([Ephesians 5:18](#)). Paul said in [Romans 8](#), "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" ([Romans 8:14](#)). In [Acts 1:8](#), Jesus said, "And you will receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon you."

So we as the believer have that same relationship with the Spirit that Jesus had, and that we can be filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and empowered by the Spirit of God.

And as he was there went out a fame of him through all of the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all ([Luk 4:14-15](#)).

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He was going around teaching in the synagogues in the area of the Galilee. Now at this particular time, according to Josephus, at this time was the governor in the area of Galilee, and Josephus in his writings declares that he had two hundred and four cities in his jurisdiction that had populations exceeding 10,000 people. So at the time that Jesus was ministering in the Galilee, it was a very populated area, perhaps as many as three million people. Of course, that's the number that Josephus claims--three million people living in the area of Galilee during the ministry of Jesus. Today there is just about four million people in all of the land of Israel, most of them are in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. There is probably less than a half a million people in the Galilee region today. But in the time of Christ, there were three million people inhabiting. Which, of course, is an extremely beautiful area. If there were an area in the world which I would enjoy living, it would be along the Sea of Galilee. It is so beautiful there; I love it there. You got hot summers, but you got the lake right there, it's just a beautiful place. In fact, they used to say in the Galilee it was easier to raise ten tons of fruit than one child. It produced so abundantly in that area.

Now, He now returned to Nazareth where He was born and where He grew up. He spent thirty years in Nazareth. Where He was known as the carpenter's son. And He was well known by the people.

And so he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as was his custom [He was in the habit of doing it], he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and he stood up to read the scriptures ([Luk 4:16](#)).

Now this was something, a custom that He had developed. He would go into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and teach. So He stood up to read the scriptures.

And they delivered unto him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah ([Luk 4:17](#)).

And, of course, all of the scriptures were on scrolls, and they would keep these in a depository in the synagogue, and they would carry it out, and they would unroll it. And so they handed Him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. And each day they had a particular passage that they read out of the scrolls. And in the synagogue worship, even to the present day, on every day of the year on this particular day they read these particular scriptures.

And so they handed him the prophet Isaiah.

And when he had opened the scroll, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of their sight to the blind, and set at liberty those that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and gave it again to the man who was in charge ([Luk 4:17-20](#)),

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It reads minister, but really he was the servant. He isn't minister in the sense that we think of a minister today. But he was just a fellow that carried the scrolls around.

and he sat down. And all of the eyes of the people that were in the synagogue were fasten on him ([Luk 4:20](#)).

When He sat down, that was indicative of the fact that He was now going begin to teach. The rabbis always sat when they taught. And so He stood to read the scriptures. But having read them, then in sitting down, he was signifying to the people He is now going to teach us the scriptures.

He looked up this particular passage in Isaiah, which is [Isaiah 61](#), and He read out of [Isaiah 61](#) the prophecy concerning the Messiah. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of the sight to the blind, and set at liberty those that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." This was to be the ministry of the Messiah. Now if you will go back to [Isaiah 61](#), you'll find that He stopped right in the middle of the text of [Isaiah 61](#). He didn't complete the reading of the ministry of the Messiah. The reason being, there are two comings of the Messiah. The rest of [Isaiah 61](#) pertains to those things that will transpire when He comes again. As it speaks of the judgment and all that will transpire. That will await His second coming. Those things that He read are the things that pertain to His first coming. This would be His works. This would be His activities. And thus, it was extremely significant that as He said, "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," He closed the book.

And in that same hour many came to Jesus who were blind and lame, the poor. And He healed them. He restored their sight. And He said to those disciples of John, "Go back and tell John what you've seen. How the blind receive their sight, the lame are walking, and to the meek the gospel is being preached." And Jesus, rather than answering directly, "Go back and tell John, 'Yes, I am the one you're looking for.'" Rather than His own testimony, in essence He was saying, "My works testify of who I am." These were to be the works of the Messiah.

Now later on Jesus said, "Believeth thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works sake." "Don't believe it because I say it unto you, but I have demonstrated the works of the Messiah. I have done those things that the scriptures said the Messiah would do, in giving sight to the blind, the lame are walking, the gospel if being preached to the poor." And these works are a witness, and they attest to the fact that Jesus is indeed the Messiah.

And so He closed the book, gave it to the minister, He sat down. Everybody was looking at Him.

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And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears ([Luk 4:21](#)).

That must have been an electric, dynamic moment. As He closed the book, having read these prophesies of the Messiah, which they all knew and recognized to be prophesies of the Messiah. And He said, "Today the scripture has been fulfilled."

When He was talking to the woman at the well, the Samaritan woman, she said to Him, "We know that when the Messiah is come, He is going to tell us everything." And Jesus said, "Woman, I've got news for you, the one who is speaking to you, is He." Imagine the dynamic of that moment, to realize, "Hey, this is it, He is the one." He is declaring this to the people here at the beginning of His ministry.

And all bore witness, and they wondered at his gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? ([Luk 4:22](#))

They were stumbled, because they knew Him.

And he said unto them, You surely will say this proverb unto me, Physician, heal thyself: for whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do it also here in this country ([Luk 4:23](#)).

Now we've heard that you have done some exciting things down in Capernaum, do something here.

And he said, I tell you the truth, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut for three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout the land; But unto none of them was Elijah sent, but to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow ([Luk 4:24-26](#)).

Now Jesus is saying some things that are going to really upset them, because one thing a Jew was, and that was, he was a complete national. In fact, in their writings of this time, the Jews taught that the Gentiles were only created for fuel for hell. And they did not believe that a Gentile could be saved. "We are the sons of Abraham." And they had this strong nationalistic feeling, feeling that salvation was only for the Jews, everyone else was excluded. So that when Jesus begins to point out a few things in their history, it upsets them.

Now in the time of Elijah when there was this famine as a result of the drought for three and a half years, there was a widow who was sustained during in the famine by Elijah. The Lord sent Elijah to her. But she wasn't a Jewess. She was in the city of Sarepta.

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And there were many lepers in Israel, though there were many widows in Israel, none of the widows were visited by Elias, just this one outside.

And there were many lepers in Israel at the time of Elijah the prophet; but none of them were cleansed, except Naaman the Syrian ([Luk 4:27](#)).

Oh, man, that's enough to make any Jew's blood boil. "We are the people. God only cares for us, and no one else."

And all of those that were in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled [with anger] with wrath. And they rose up, and threw him out of the city, and they led him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him head first over ([Luk 4:28-29](#)).

They were going to take Him up and toss Him over the cliff.

But he, passing through the midst of them on his way ([Luk 4:30](#)),

So He just disappeared actually from their sight.

And went on down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and he taught them on the sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with authority ([Luk 4:31-32](#)).

Now no one spoke with authority in those days. When anyone would preach they would say, "Now Rabbi Hallel declares..." But Jesus wasn't quoting the rabbis, He just said, "I say unto you, now you've heard that it has been said, you've heard that this is what was said, but I say unto you," and He spoke with authority. And they weren't used to that, they were amazed at the fact that He spoke with such authority. Astonished at His doctrine, for His word was with authority.

And in the synogogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know who you are; the Holy one of God ([Luk 4:33-34](#)).

The demons recognized Him. And here in the synagogue in Capernaum the demon possessed man cries out.

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and did not hurt him. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What kind of word is this! for with authority and power he commands the unclean spirit, and they come out ([Luk 4:35-36](#)).

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Now in those days they had rights of exorcism. I mean, they would go through a ceremony that you wouldn't believe. Gaze over that person with that unclean, and they would use sometimes a gold ring, and go through this whole long routine and rigmarole to exorcise the unclean spirits. And it was really a heavy-duty thing. And here Jesus is just speaking to them, and commanding them, and they are coming out. And they are saying, "Hey, wait a minute. What is going on here? What kind of word of authority is this that He can just speak to them and they are obedient to Him?"

And his fame went out in to every place of the country around that area. And he arose out of the synagogue, and he entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with great fever; and they besought him for her ([Luk 4:37-38](#)).

Now we would not even know that Peter was married for sure, except that his wife's mother was sick and was taken with a great fever. Now this is in the Greek medical terms. Luke was a doctor, and thus, he diagnoses her condition with medical terms in the Greek language here.

And they came to Jesus that He might help her.

And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she rose and [fixed dinner for them] ministered unto them ([Luk 4:39](#)).

Which means fix something to eat, and prepare something for them, as mothers are so prone to do. You know, just that typical neat mom that goes out and fix something for them.

And when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with diverse kind of diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art the Messiah, the Son of God. And he rebuked them, and would not allow them to speak: for they knew that he was the Messiah. And when it was day, he departed and went into a deserted area: and the people were looking for him, and they came unto him, and they begged him that he would not depart from them. But he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee ([Luk 4:40-44](#)).

Now if there were two hundred and four cities, the population of 10,000 plus, it would take a good while to get around to all of these fairly good sized little communities, two hundred and four of them, to preach in the synagogues throughout the area of Galilee.