



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK 2

It is true to say that our lives are often defined by what takes place after our toughest moments. After resisting the temptations of the devil in the first part of Luke chapter 4, Jesus came out of that wilderness with a boldness that (although it may also have been there before) was strengthened and steeled as he began to teach in the synagogues of Galilee. Whatever kind of season you find yourself in right now, I pray that you will walk with the power of the Spirit of God, and that God's calling becomes more and more clear as you study the Scripture and pray this week.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 4.14-15

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.

- Recall the first verse of last week's passage. "And Jesus, full of the Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led... (John 4.1). Verse 14 sounds very similar doesn't it? Jesus went from his baptism, into the wilderness with the power of the God's Spirit. He also returned from the wilderness with the Spirit. But in his return, Luke emphasizes that Jesus had the *power* of the Spirit. Luke's framing of the holy spirit was real and intentional. For Jesus, the Spirit of God was not just a cozy feeling, but his guide and his power. **Is your life framed by the Holy Spirit? Does your daily coming and going sometimes feel like a trip to and from the wilderness? When do you feel most led by God? When have you felt the power of the Spirit?**
- *Father God, I want to walk in the Spirit and experience Your power. Give me a renewed sense of your mission in my life and guide me with the Spirit. Amen.*

TUESDAY: LUKE 4.16-21

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.”*

- What a bold move by Jesus on that Sabbath day! The passage he read was not the typical passage that would have been read that day, and most likely, he wasn't on the list to bring the reading. The power of the Spirit led him to action in these days immediately following his baptism and subsequent temptation in the wilderness. By walking up and reading this passage—and then proclaiming it fulfilled, Jesus was saying that he was the Messiah and that his mission was to the poor, imprisoned, and oppressed. **Have you ever been so moved to action that it seemed you were powered by an external force? How would you define God's mission for you?**
- *God, as you bring clarity to my identity in you, would you also clarify my calling? What have you put me here for? What am I about? Who have you sent me to and what should I do? Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: LUKE 4.22-24

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.

- What does it mean that *no prophet is acceptable in his hometown*? Is it because the people there have trouble hearing hard truths from someone they knew so intimately? Do they know too much about his parents' imperfections or his childhood adventures? Notice the transition that is highlighted by Jesus' own words here. The crowds were already clamoring for him. In verse 14, his fame and reputation were growing. But because this was his own hometown, he would not do the things he was known for in Capernaum. **Can you imagine what it would look like if God's messenger was the kid who lived next door? How might that impact your view of God and how God chooses to show up in the world?**
- *Jesus, I know that you have been sent from the Father to preach and proclaim Good News. Speak Lord, and give me faith to see you wherever you are working. Amen.*

THURSDAY: LUKE 4.25-30

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.

- Did the people of Nazareth drive him out of town because he had upset them, or because they didn't understand him? His hometown didn't receive preferential treatment just because it was his hometown. God often speaks to those who seem to be on the outside. In his response, Jesus referenced examples from 1 Kings 17:8-16 and 2 Kings 5:1-14. Both prophets Elijah and Elisha helped those who were Gentiles (not Jews) because they were more open to receiving word from God. This was his response to the request for miracles in his hometown. The hearts of the people there were not ready to receive what Jesus had been sent to offer. This led to another dramatic scene where Jesus had been driven to the edge of town and threatened. The people were mad and hurt but no one stopped him from simply walking away from the danger and moving on. Beneath their anger, they seemed to know that Jesus was right—and unstoppable. **Have you ever questioned why God's mercy is extended towards a particular person or group? Where does that feeling come from and what might it indicate about you?**
- *God, thank you for sending Jesus to the poor and oppressed ones who seem to be outside of your chosen people. I count myself among them and therefore give my life to you today. Amen.*

FRIDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 12.7b-12

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

¹¹ I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing.¹² I persevered in demonstrating among you the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles.¹³

- Paul was aware of his own ego and self-importance. He learned this lesson over the course of his ministry starting with his encounter with the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Acts 9:3-8). Paul didn't explain what the thorn in the flesh was, and it was a helpful omission because we can relate to an ailment or difficulty that seems to remain with us for a long time. In recognizing our own times of trial, we can increase our reliance on God's grace and look to the power of Christ resting on us. **What are the difficult seasons or conditions that seem to remain with you? How has God's power been made perfect through them?**
- *God, reveal your grace and your power in my most difficult situations. Bring clarity to my calling and give me power to live it out now and on the other side of this season. Amen.*

SATURDAY: EPHESIANS 3.12-13

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

- Jesus moved from personal victory to freedom and confidence as he rolled out his ministry. We too can live in freedom and confidence because of him. Paul identified that his sufferings were not signs of weakness or defeat, rather the glory of God. Even in our suffering we can see how God is at work in us and through us. Are you experiencing freedom and confidence in God's mission for your life? What are the doubts and insecurities that seem to hold you back?
- *Almighty God, work through the seasons of suffering. I believe that Jesus has made a way for me to come to you with freedom and confidence. Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Grab your Bible and read Isaiah 61 in its entirety (below you will find just the first 4 verses) . This is the passage that Jesus read in the synagogue that day when he announced that his time of ministry had begun.

*The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the Lord
for the display of his splendor.
⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;
they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations.*

- What phrases give you the most hope? Where do you see the life of Jesus in this passage?
- Does this passage have anything to say to the world around us today?