

Jesus Gets to Work

Luke 4:14-15

August 7, 2016

We have finished a long section on Jesus' origins, kinda the story of where he came from and what qualifies him, that began with Luke 1:5, there after the prologue, ended with last week's sermon in Luke 4:13. Luke's Gospel, as we've seen, provides the most in-depth treatment of Jesus' beginnings as Luke prepares his readers to meet the Savior and to see the significance of his ministry. We see, we saw in that section that we studied, Luke 1:5 to 4:13, we saw Old Testament prophecy.

We saw the providential planning, timing. We saw the preparation ministry of John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah. We saw the preaching of a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Luke also spent time showing us in that section, that first section Jesus' qualifications to be the promised Messiah. He's the royal son of David; he's the promised son of Abraham. He's the human son of Adam, who represents all

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the human race. And he's the divine Son of God manifesting full deity.

As we saw in the timing there, Jesus was born at the right time. We saw the location. He was born in the right place. And at his birth, he was honored by all the holy angelic hosts, highest saints alike, and most importantly, Jesus was honored by his Father in heaven. God affirmed him when the heavens broke open and the voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

After declaring his approval from heaven of his son by the leading of the Holy Spirit, God sent Jesus into the wilderness to let the devil tempt him, testing him. And as we've studied we studied those over the past few weeks, those temptations from the devil, Jesus' success in that time of testing, the forty days in the wilderness, there was no question mark hanging over his time in the wilderness.

God knew, which is why he approved Jesus before he sent him into the wilderness, God knew of Jesus' success. He decreed his

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success from before the foundation of the world, from eternity past. So those trials in the wilderness were not for the sake of proving Jesus as much as they were for our sake so that we could see that Jesus is the perfect mediator, the merciful, faithful High Priest. It was for our sake.

So, this Jesus whom we've been reading about, whom we've been anticipating. We're about to see him in action. This is someone who had been decreed from eternity past, prophesied about in Scripture, promised by God. He's been qualified, tested, approved by God. And now, informed by all of that, we're ready. We've been readied by Luke to read about Jesus' ministry. Take a look at your Bibles, and we'll pick up the narrative at Luke 4:13.

"When the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out throughout all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went into the

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synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.

“And he unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, ‘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, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ And then 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.

“And he began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, ‘Is this not Joseph’s son?’ 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.’ And he said, ‘Truly, I say to you no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel during the days of Elijah, when

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the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of ol, prophet, elij, Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman, a Syrian.'

"When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. 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. But passing through their midst, he went away."

Thus begins the Galilean ministry. It's kind of sobering, isn't it? That's a section, this Galilean ministry, that is going to run from here all the way to Luke 9:50. Jesus' Galilean ministry really does give us the substance of his earthly ministry, his teaching and his miracles. The calling and commissioning of the twelve disciples are found here. The Sermon on the Mount, many of the parables, the feeding of the five thousand, that's found here as well.

Peter's good confession and then the transfiguration, all that happened in and around Galilee during the Galilean ministry. And at the end of that time, Jesus came to the end of his Galilean ministry, which was the substance of his ministry and teaching and everything he did on earth, came to the end of that time, and he forecasted to his disciples some pretty ominous news. You can see if for yourself if you turn over to Luke 9:18, Luke 9:18.

And this section here at the end of Luke 9, it marks a major turning point in Jesus' ministry. This is where Peter makes the good confession, where he acknowledges Jesus' true identity and while the disciples believe they're heading into a time of restoration prosperity, of great victory, Jesus tempers their enthusiasm with warning.

Look at what it says there in Luke 9:18, "Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, 'Who do the crowds say that I am?' And they answered, 'John the Baptist. Oh but others say Elijah, and

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others that one of the prophets of old has risen.' Then he said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered, 'The Christ of God.' And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.'"

A lot of confusion, popularly, a lot of confusion in the culture about who Jesus was. It was crystal clear for the disciples, though, right? They weren't just wiser than anybody else, in fact, sometimes we can see throughout their lives and ministry they were downright thick. Heaven had revealed this to them. And for the time being, Jesus was content with the popular confusion about who he really was, but he wanted his close disciples to know. He didn't want the word about his true identity to get out just yet.

And that's, you'll see that theme running through the Gospel narratives where Jesus tries to prevent the spread of his miraculous power, prevent the spread of his own identity. When the demons proclaim, "We know who you are—the Son of God," and

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he tries to shut that down. You have to ask, Why? Why didn't he, if he came to save the lost and seek the lost, if he came to be the Messiah, why not let the news out? Well, he needed to avoid a premature coronation by those who were zealous in the land who wanted to see the Messiah quickly crowned that they might reign and rule with him. He had suffering to endure. He had a cross to die upon.

And on the other side, for those who weren't zealous about seeing him crowned, but were actually jealous of him, he needed to prevent premature hostility from them, from the jealousy of the religious leaders, which would result in an early death.

So Jesus knew he had to die in the exact manner, at the exact location, at precisely the right time, all according to the father's plan and schedule, so he kept it muted. The disciples heard his ominous news, and for them, this was not good news. Frankly, it's pretty much lost on them. It kind of went in one ear and out the other.

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This moment it made no sense to them. I mean everything was going swimmingly well. Jesus is doing miracles, his teaching is stunning, everyone, they're anticipating a bright and glorious future, accompanying Jesus into Jerusalem to take the throne. And they're going to rule, one at his right and one at his left, and all the disciples around. They're not able to process at this time a future of suffering and death.

And notice in the text that Jesus doesn't leave the ambiguity. He actually pressed the point. He's explicit with them, driving it home. Look at verse 23 "He said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?'"

That's the bargain, right? Total self-denial in exchange for Christ. Paradoxically, losing your life means saving it. Giving away all means gaining everything and that's the deal. That's what we embrace. That's what every one of Christ's true

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disciples embraces in coming to Christ, denial of self, taking up the cross and following him. That's what following Christ means. It means to deny self. It means death to self, and it means the absolute, unqualified obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord. That's the deal.

As Jesus anticipated his approaching suffering, he knew he had to leave the Galilean north and head down to the Judean south. Why did he have to make that trek from the north to the south? Because that's where Jerusalem is. And that's where his death would happen. So there's a change of pace when we reach the end of Jesus' Galilean ministry in Luke 9. Look just ahead in Luke 9 while you're there at verse 51. It says there in Luke 9:51, "When the days drew near for him to be taken up," taken up where? To the cross, to suffering, to death. "When the days drew near to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem."

He set his face, he, he steeled himself. He set his jaw like flint, and he was absolutely determined and resolved. He would not be deterred. From that point on, Luke records throughout the rest of his Gospel, Jesus' death march from Galilee through

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Perea to Judea to Jerusalem to face his executioners. As he declared resolutely in Luke 13:33, "I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem." Jesus knew he was heading to the cross.

So Luke records, you can go back to Luke 4, Luke records, first of all in his Gospel, the qualifying marks of Jesus' life and ministry, that's Luke 1:5 to 4:13. He records at the end of the Gospel, he records the purpose of Jesus' life in ministry, that is, to die for the sins of his people. And as we said, that goes from Luke 9:51 all the way to the end of the Gospel. This section, though, that we're entering into right here in the middle, Luke 4:14 to 9:50, we can call this the substance of Jesus' life and ministry. This is what it's all about. This is what the news reports are about. This is what they were talking about. This is what became known is what happened in these chapters.

The Galilean ministry itself covers about a year and a half. Th, this whole section we're about to get into, it starts in the

winter of AD 27-28 and it goes all the way to the end of the summer in AD 29. He's going to be at the Passover on the cross in the spring of AD 30, the very next year. When this middle section, the Galilean ministry, this substance of Jesus' ministry, this helps us grasp the spiritual significance of all of this.

This tells us why he was qualified on the first part, for what. It also tells us why did what he did. The focus throughout this section is on Jesus' teaching in all of its glorious simplicity and profundity. The divine authority of his teaching is not only heard in the nature of his teaching itself, but it's authenticated by God by divine miracles.

As we see, the narrative is punctuated by acts of supernatural power. His miracles aren't just shows, they're signs, like a signpost and they point us to something important. They point us to him, point us to his true words, his words of life that are spoken by this miracle worker. And if we don't understand the teaching, then Jesus' death is going to look pretty strange to us.

In fact, it looks pretty strange to many people in our own culture. It has always looked strange to people who don't believe. It's going to look, perhaps, like nothing more than a political statement. It's going to look maybe like a senseless, fruitless act of protest, that's how many have interpreted it. But if we understand Jesus' teaching, we are going to see that his death is nothing less than salvation from the wrath of God for sins. Nothing less than an escape from punishment in eternal hell.

For now, we're just going to look at those first two verses of introduction, verses 14 and 15, before we dive into this experience he had in Nazareth. These two verses, verses 14 and 15, are absolutely critical for helping us understand what happened in Nazareth. These two verses, Luke has made a masterful transition from one section of his Gospel to another, from the qualification of Jesus to the substance of his ministry centered in Galilee.

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And you wouldn't know it at first glance, but those two verses, verses 14 and 15, they actually cover about a year and a half of time. That's quite a summary, isn't it? Luke has fast-forwarded the story from somewhere around the summer of AD 26 to the winter of AD 27. And you get a hint of that in verse 23 when, when he anticipates the people saying, "What we have heard you did at Capernaum," past tense.

So evidently, Jesus had done something at Capernaum, a neighboring village on the north shores of the Sea of Galilee, about 15 miles or so from Nazareth. He had done something noteworthy there, something remarkable. Luke doesn't record it here. It doesn't fit his purposes. He passed by the incident, but he did drop a hint that there is more to the story. And knowing, knowing that, it helps us to see what Luke meant when he introduces this section in verse 14, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee."

We don't want to get the wrong impression from that phrase, "Jesus returned in the power of the spirit to Galilee." We don't want to get the impression that Jesus came charging back from

the wilderness immediately, full of zeal, ready to march into his hometown synagogue and get to preaching. Luke writes, the second part of the verse, "A report about him went out through all the surrounding country." We need to realize time had passed. Some things had happened. His fame had preceded him. He was already known.

As you'll see in your bulletin there are just two outline points for this morning: The circumstances of Jesus' return and the characteristics of Jesus' ministry. We're going to spend the bulk of our time on that first outline point, the circumstances of Jesus' return. What we cover today is going to set some very crucial context for what we cover next week.

It's going to help us understand what led to this violent reaction by his home crowd, people who knew him, watched him growing up. I mean, what in the world would cause them to get so angry that they want to throw him off a cliff? Have any of you had an evangelism encounter even with a friend or a loved one that turned nasty on you? I've had sermons that turn nasty before. Maybe it was because of my preaching. Sometimes it's the

truth that offends, though, and you know that because you've talked to people about the Gospel.

The truth is a dividing word. It separates people. Jesus even said once, he said "Don't think that I came to bring peace on the earth, I didn't come to bring peace, but a sword. I came to bring division and to set members of families against one another." That's coming from our merciful Savior, Jesus Christ. It's a hard word. Truth divides. But there's a context to what we see here. There's a reason that it gets ugly, it gets violent. And what we cover today is going to help us to understand what it was that they expected and anticipated, what they seemed to demand and when they didn't get their expectations fulfilled, they're ready to kill him.

Let's begin there with our first point, the circumstances of Jesus' return. Look at verse 14 again. It says, "Jesus returned in the power of the spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out throughout all the surrounding country." We're going to divide this into two sub-points just to keep it all clear in our minds. You can put the sub-points in your notes if you'd like

to. We'll talk first about the meaning of that phrase, that "Jesus returned in power," and then we'll talk about the circumstances of his return to Galilee.

So those two sub-points you can write down are: Jesus returned in power and Jesus returned to Galilee. Jesus returned in power and Jesus returned to Galilee. So if you're taking notes, you might jot this down as sub-point letter A or number one or put it in a circle or whatever you'd like to do. Jesus returned in power. "When the devil had ended every temptation," verse 13, he left him, Jesus was left physically exhausted. He hadn't eaten for forty days, okay. He was, was weak, he was tired, he's hungry. There's a spiritual strain that he went through going through all of this as a flesh-and-blood man. He had physical needs like calories. Just simple things like that, for he needed energy. He needed sleep to rest his body, rest his mind. He needed a time of physical restoration to engage the challenges of the ministry ahead of him.

And Matthew tells us actually, helps us to understand, Matthew 4:11, that after the devil left him, angels came and they were

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ministering to him there. That's what angels do. It says in Hebrews 1:14 that angels are all "ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation." Do you know who that is? That's us. Angelic ministry for our sake. And that ministry is predicated upon an extension of their ministry here to the author of our salvation. We're the inheritors of salvation and receive their ministry. He's the author of our salvation. He's the Savior who won our salvation.

And here they are, Matthew 4:11, they're ministering to him. And for the successful fulfillment of his ministry, Jesus didn't just need his body rested, well-fed. He needed that. He needed more, though, than just that, just the physical sustenance and strength. He needed even more than angelic help. He needed a serious spiritual invigoration and all the physical stamina in the world attended by the ministry of all the angels in the heavens, none of that would lead to the accomplishment of his mission on earth without the attendant power of the Holy Spirit.

Zechariah 4:6, right, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts." That's how Jesus conducted his

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ministry, in the power of the Holy Spirit. I don't want you to miss the connection to holiness. Luke kept it connected right here. Luke is the author. He kept, he keeps it connected. He skips over a year and a half of ministry that we're going to unpack today.

But he keeps Jesus' return in the power of the spirit to Galilee, he keeps it connected with his success in standing firm against the devil in the wilderness. Holiness, sinlessness, that's power. He stood firm through the devil's temptations. The Holy Spirit is present with him in power. He's active and energetic in a holy life. There are no hindrances in Jesus' life, no sin to blunt the force of the spirit. Unlike us, Jesus is completely free from any weight from the sin which so easily entangles us. He's unhindered. He's full of the Spirit's power for ministry.

On just a footnote, we need to drive this home for ourselves, don't we? Do not be fooled, beloved, don't be fooled about the power of sin in your life to mute the Spirit's ministry. Sin will deafen you from hearing his voice. Sin will deaden and

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harden your heart. Sin will dull your conscience. Scales will fall over your eyes, and you think you see clearly, but you don't see what he wants to show you. Beloved, the Holy Spirit moves without hindrance in a life that is wholly devoted to obeying the Lord Jesus Christ. Not just in the particulars. Not just obeying him in the things you like about his ministry, but in everything that he preaches.

General widespread comprehensive commitment in your life to obedience, to opening up every crack and crevice, nook and cranny in your heart, to his gaze, letting him see it all, repenting of it all, and embracing him. The Holy Spirit moves in a life like that. Holiness is power. Holiness is strength. Holiness is clarity of mind. Sin, on the other hand, is blinding, deafening, deadening, it cripples you and the trick of it is with sin, it deceives you with pride into thinking you're fine. Beloved, if there's any sin in your life, you need to abandon it. Repent. Turn from it because God will not bless a life that is holding onto sin.

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That's what we see in Jesus' ministry is this unhindered, strong life of holiness. There's nothing in him to hinder the Spirit's work in and, and through his life. The Spirit's power is present in Jesus, and, and still his power is active in a way that's unique from me and you. There's a difference here. Notice that the, in verse 14, end of verse it says, "A report about him went out throughout all the surrounding country." This is one of the clues that Luke has given us, which allows us to see this verse is a summary. There is some report out there.

Where did it come from? I mean, if Jesus went directly from the wilderness, directly into Galilee to Nazareth, started preaching in his hometown synagogue, what report would have preceded him? If we're looking only at what's recorded in Luke's Gospel, it doesn't seem like there is much to tell. Something had happened; something significant. Word had gotten around, as we noted just a minute ago, at verse 23, the report of what Jesus had done in Capernaum, that had reached the village of Nazareth. That had been spread. So we'd be left to guess at what, at what happened if God had not left us without a witness. But he hasn't. He's given us a witness in his Word. He gave us the fourth Gospel,

the Gospel of John, and you'll want to turn over there to fill in the details.

Let's fill in the gaps of this year-and-a-half summary that Luke has given us with the sub-point letter B or one or whatever you want to call it. Sub-point, second sub-point here: Jesus' return to Galilee, Jesus' return to Galilee. And there is, there are some stages in this return to Galilee because of what's written in the other Gospels and particularly in John 1 and following. We're able to track Jesus as he moves from Judea to Samaria and enters into Galilee. We might describe his return in stages. Stage one we could call the exposure in Judea; stage two we could call evangelism in Samaria and stage three establishment in Galilee. Exposure, evangelism, establishment.

So stage one: Exposure in Judea. Here in the first chapter of John's Gospel, right after the prologue, verses 1-18, John enters into his record about Jesus' life and ministry. And he does it like the other writers do, through the witness of John the Baptist. We come upon a scene right at the start of inquisition. We, we come upon the Jewish leaders who had sent

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some of their people, some of their envoys to come and interrogate John the Baptist about his identity.

Let's look at verse 19 and we'll start reading there. This is the testimony of John. "When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I'm not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.'" So they said to him, 'Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I'm the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord," as the prophet Isaiah said.' Now they had been sent from the Pharisees."

We see that this is a suspicious interrogation. It's a hostile interrogation. "And they asked him, 'Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize you with water, but among you stands one whom you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.' These things took

place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.”
And we’ll stop there.

We, when we studied about the ministry of John the Baptist in Luke Chapter 3, his ministry was of no minor consequence. The crowds were drawn to this man. They saw him as a prophet. And there was no prophetic voice for 400 years in Israel, so when this guy came to town, he stood out. He got their attention. He was self-evidently a true prophet of God. The crowds were so numerous. His, his appeal was so diverse and so widespread. He started attracting some political attention.

As we talked about when we studied that section, Herod Antipas sent some of his soldiers even to investigate, thinking this might be another insidious attempt to unseat him from his power and they, those soldiers came, they came to John’s ministry and they came under conviction. They had heard his preaching, and they were convicted and they wanted to repent. Not exactly what Herod Antipas wanted, but there they are, nonetheless.

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As we see here, the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, they also took notice. They heard and they sent some of their priests and Levites to make inquiries. So with this gathered crowd, heightened sense of conflict, some opposition, the political and the religious leadership, paying close attention, scrutinizing, the stakes are high, tension is thick and guess who comes back from the desert at that moment? Verse 28, "These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing." Oh, where Jesus had just left a month ago, a month and a half ago.

"And the next day," verse 29, "he saw Jesus coming toward him and he said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me." I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.' And John bore witness: 'I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I have seen and have born witness that this is the Son of God.'"

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Timing, again, is amazing, isn't it? It's probably been a month and a half, maybe two months since John baptized Jesus. He that was there when the heavens opened, when the spirit descended, he heard the voice of the father. When Jesus went up out of the water, he disappeared. He walked off. He didn't come back. No doubt John wondered where he went. But he had a ministry of baptism to fulfill; he had to attend to that.

He's, but he did start talking about it right away, didn't he? He couldn't, can anybody keep a preacher's mouth shut? Right! He, he just started going off. He can't stay silent and especially now when the, when the subject about whom he is speaking and testifying, when that person shows up. All this tension, all this scrutiny, all these questions. Jesus arrives. Purpose of his ministry, John's ministry is being fulfilled right here. All during Jesus absence, those forty days in the wilderness, the time of physical restoration, John's been talking about it, telling everyone. Now he shows up. He's adding fuel to already ignited fires of Messianic expectation among the crowd.

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That no doubt again caught the attention of the, the religious establishment in Jerusalem. The emergence of the Messiah, represent for them, for the religious leaders, they would think, Oh, Messiah's here. Time to make some introductions. Let them know we've already got things pretty well handled around here in Jerusalem. We want to let you know who's in charge, what the ranking structure is as you're coming in to take over. They want to probably jockey for position, give him assurances that they were the right man for the job.

Jesus had other plans. They didn't know that. Here with the envoys of Jerusalem looking on, Jesus reappear, reappears. John testifies yet again, pointing to Jesus. John's disciples', their ears perk up. They take keen interest. Look at verse 35, his, they've learned under his prophetic ministry. This is so exciting. Verse 35, "The next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and they looked," looked, "at Jesus as he walked by and he said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God!'" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following and said," to him, "to them, 'What are you seeking?' And they said to him, 'Rabbi,' which means

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teacher, 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and you will see.'"

If you keep on reading in the narrative, you find that Andrew was one of those. He found his brother Simon. They are two of the first of Jesus' disciples to meet Jesus. Then it says in verse 41, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He left Judea here to go to Galilee, to the city of Bethsaida. That's where Andrew and Simon were from. They were later relocated to Capernaum, that's where they lived, but they were evidently born and raised in Bethsaida.

Then Jesus after that found Philip. He added him to the group. We read at the end of the chapter how Philip found Nathaniel. Nathaniel becomes convinced that Jesus is who is he says he is by his remarkable, remarkable prophetic even supernatural insight into his prayer life, as he is praying in private underneath the fig tree, and along with the other men, all of whom had been looking for the Messiah, anticipating his arrival.

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They're excited. This interest is definitely generated by John's ministry. These men have been studying the Scriptures. They've been followers of John, learning from his ministry. And now that they see Christ, they turn and follow him. They are among the first disciples; they followed him right into Galilee.

So that's Jesus' first exposure in Judea through the testimony of John the Baptist. But there's more here. There's more exposure that comes not just through the testimony of John the Baptist, but with his first miracle in Cana of Galilee.

Look at John 2, verse 1, "On the third day," now again, they're there in Bethsaida, "On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus," was also, "was invited to the wedding with his disciples." So here's an early time in the life of the disciples with Jesus. Verse 3, "When the wine ran out." which is a terrible, terrible faux pas in those days, "when the wine ran out," that is, that sends shivers down the spine of anybody hosting a wedding in those days.

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"When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus," said to them, "said to him, 'they have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does that have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rights of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to his servants, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, 'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.'

"So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from," though the servants who had drawn the water knew, "the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely," that is, when they're a little tipsy and don't know the difference, "then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.' This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him."

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Look, we need to put the scope of this miracle into some perspective because you need to understand the significance of what this did in providing exposure to him early in his ministry. Six stone water jars used for purification, each holding twenty to thirty gallons of water. That means when Jesus created, wa, wine from water, he just created a total volume of 120 to 150 gallons of wine. That is a lot, folks. It's incredible. I did a brief bit of research in a field that is pretty foreign to me.

It's called Oenology from the Greek word for wine, *oinos*. Oenology is the study of wine. And here's what I learned just researching on the Internet, folks. I just want to make it clear. An average bottle of wine, 26 ounces, yields about five servings. And there's a standard catering estimate for a wedding that is roughly about two and half servings per guest in a single event. So we could say that for every two guests they'd be happy if they were sharing a bottle of wine. One gallon, that's about 128 ounces, or I guess precisely 128 ounces, that's equal to about five bottles of wine, which means Jesus just created enough wine to fill 600 to 750 bottles of wine. That

much wine could easily serve between 300, 375 guests in a single evening.

Now, at cheap wine prices, let's say five bucks a bottle, that amount of wine would cost between three thousand dollars, three hundred, four thousand dollars, somewhere in there. But for the more expensive wines, they can cost anywhere from about three hundred dollars per bottle, that's for some Chateaux Lafite Rothschild Pauillac, and if you are French experts, sorry about that. But it could also cost as much as fifteen hundred dollars a bottle for some Domaine Romanée-Conti. Now remember, this is not that wine. This is miracle wine. The grapes are not grown or harvested. The juice wasn't processed, bottled or aged. Coming from the Creator's hand, we would expect it to be pretty good. In fact, as the Creator said at the end of day seven, very good, right?

John records the reaction of the master of the banquet. His exclamation grabbed everybody's attention. It confirmed that this was very good wine. So at fine wine prices, to put this in perspective, Jesus' miracle provided somewhere around \$180,000

to \$225,000 in wine at the low end. If we go to the high end, which we probably should, around a million dollars. At today's prices in today's market, Jesus had just provided this village wedding with a gift of wine estimated at more than a million dollars.

Folks, that's unheard of; not just in Cana, but anywhere. This does not happen. Who knew about it? The servants knew, master of the feast didn't even know, not initially. Jesus' mother didn't know, not initially. It was the servants, the ones who served the water-made-wine, they knew. The lowliest among them, they knew. And then we learn in verse 11 that his disciples knew about it. This sign pointed to his glory. It pointed to his Creator-like glory and power; pointed to the identity of his true nature. Let me tell you, word got around. Things like that don't happen without notice. People started talking.

They, they left Cana, it says in verse 12, and they went down to Capernaum, but the word of what had happened there that day, that spread throughout Galilee, throughout the whole region. The exposure of his Messianic ministry just got a massive boost, and

word spread around the region. What he did next, though, that's what really put him onto the map. He headed back to Jerusalem, it says for the Passover, in verse 13. He took his disciples with him.

Look at it there in verse 13, "The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the Temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers all sitting there." It's pretty typical fare in Jesus' day during the, at the Temple exercised at the Passover. Foreigners were coming from all over the world, and all the profiteers, all the chief priests and the Sadducees, they saw this as a great opportunity to make a little money.

Well, there's exchange rates, there's um, Oh, your lamb that you brought from Babylon, that's actually not a good lamb. Here's a flaw, here's a defect. By the way, we have some lambs for sale over here. Exorbitant prices! And we're making money, and Jesus comes in and he sees this.

Verse 15, "And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the Temple, with the sheep and oxen." Oxen, "He poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, 'Take these things away; do not make my Fathers' house a house of trade.' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' So the Jews said to him, 'What sign do you show us for doing these things?'"

It's unbelievable, they had the audacity to question him at that moment. "But Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'It's taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you will raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken."

This is a powerful confrontation here, right? As Jesus drives the commerce out of the Temple, house of worship, he's indignant. He takes immediate action. When the Jewish

authorities question him, he recognizes them for the unbelieving hypocrites that they are. They want a sign, so he points them to the sign of his resurrection from the dead, which they themselves will set up by crucifying him just a few short years later. And even though he refused to perform a song-and-dance routine for these hypocritical leaders, Jesus did perform signs while he was there in Jerusalem.

Look at what it says there in verse 23. "When he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about a man because he himself knew what was in man."

He knew the leaf was fickle, it was easily distracted, but nonetheless, there he is, he's doing signs in Jerusalem. He's doing that all during the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As I said, massive crowds were present during, this one of the three major Jewish feasts. It says in verse 23, "Many believed in his name." They were impressed by the signs, by the

miracles, the power, and they believed, at least initially, at least to some degree. One of the many who saw the signs, who believed, was a very significant individual named Nicodemus. He's a teacher of the Jews. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the council of Israel.

Notice John 3:1 and 2, "Now there was a man," named, "of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.'"

Sounds flattering. This rabbi, Nicodemus, probably, sixties, seventies, studied all of his life, respected, and he says, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher come from God." Who is the, we? Nicodemus is relaying to Jesus the judgment of the Sanhedrin; this is the ruling council of the Jews in Jerusalem. So in a very short time, notice the, the upper echelon of all Jewish society, the very top of the top had taken notice of Jesus.

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His fame, his reputation had spread, and one of their leaders, the one at the very top, the one with great respect, he didn't summon Jesus to come see him. He himself went and visited Jesus; paid him a personal visit, and rather than be flattered by that visit, Jesus loved Nicodemus and he told him the truth. He loved him enough to confront him with the truth of his spiritual condition. He confronted his spiritual blindness there in verse 3. He confronted his spiritual deadness and his inability in verses 5-8. He confronted his lack of basic biblical understanding in verse 10, "You are a teacher of Israel and you do not understand these things?"

Then he under, confronted his fundamental problem of unbelief in verses 11-15. You do not receive what we say. The conversation, as you know, provides us with some of the richest teaching in the Bible on the necessity of the new birth, on justification by faith. John 3:16 is embedded right in the middle of this chapter. It's, it's a chapter that tells us about the blinding darkness that comes from a commitment to sin. It talks about the proof of faith and the deeds of those who repent and come to the light bringing their deeds into the open that they might be clearly seen.

We're so grateful for this fourth Gospel. And we'd like to stick around, I know, and spend some time in this text, but we do need to keep moving. This is just to expose to you what Jesus' reputation was, what provided the reputation.

I've been told, ladies, that the study this fall from Kathy Edwards and June Shannon is going to be going through John's Gospel, so if you want more in-depth study of this, stay tuned to details about that.

But we have seen enough at this early stage to see Jesus' ministry is in full swing. It gained massive exposure in Judea, exposure through John's testimony through the sign of the wine, through the clearing of the Temple, this conversation with Nicodemus, all of his teaching. And now all of that meant a meteoric rise to fame very quickly. That's evidenced in what we read in Luke 4:14, Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, report went out, throughout all the surrounding country.

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After this conversation with Nicodemus and perhaps informed by the fact that he had the attention of the Sanhedrin, it says in verse 22 that Jesus in chapter 3 there, Jesus withdrew into the Judean countryside. His popularity was swelling. His reputation was spreading far and wide. And all those pilgrims who visited Jerusalem at Passover returned home, they brought with them all these stories of signs and wonders. They told of Jesus' zeal for holiness, talked about his teaching, its depth, its clarity, its power, its authority. Jesus knew that the growing popularity risked an impetuous action. Whether it was from the admiring crowds, who'd want to crown him prematurely, or from the jealous leadership who wanted to make him disappear. You can see the motivation for Jesus' withdrawal from Jerusalem due to a rapid rise in his popularity.

It's right there in the text, the first in the fact that his ministry was beginning to eclipse that of John the Baptist. Look in verse 26 of John 3. Some of John's disciples, "came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, he who as with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.'" You can appreciate their loyalty. But it's profoundly misguided. John corrects them.

At the end of the chapter, he says, He must increase, I must decrease. Look, John gets it. He rejoices like the friend of the bridegroom to see Jesus glorified, but not everybody's rejoicing. Look at Chapter 4, verse 1, "Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John ... , he left Judea," verse 3, "and departed again for Galilee."

The other Gospels, Matthew and Mark, they tell us that John had actually been arrested, and that was the reason that Jesus decided to go to Galilee. Matthew 4:12 says, "Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee." Mark 1:14, same thing. That happened in the white spaces between John 3:37 and John 4:1.

And it's not only, his arrest was not only motivated by the irritation of Herod, Luke described that, remember, in Luke 3:19 and 20, that Herod, being convicted by John, he put him into prison. But Herod's motivation, that's his personal motivation for imprisoning John, but that's not what led to it.

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As we see in Matthew 4:12 and Mark 1:14, the verb that's used there is the verb *paradidomi* and it means he was handed over. So, John was handed over to Herod by whom? There's some intrigue going on here. The Jewish leaders, out of jealousy, were involved in handing John over to Herod, and they incited Herod to their cause, pointing out how John had meddled in his private affairs, and they wanted to deliver him over.

Listen, Jesus knew these people. He knew these Pharisees and Sadducees, what were like. He knew what the Herodians were like. He knew their character. He understood their motivations. He saw through their intrigue, through their hypocrisy, their collaboration. He wasn't fooled. When he heard that John had been delivered over, when he'd been handed over, put in prison, he heard the Pharisees had taken note of his own popularity, which was eclipsing and greater than John's, he put two and two together and knew it was only a matter of time.

And his death was going to be on his time table, the Fathers' time table, not theirs. He still had work to do. By the

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direction of the Holy Spirit, according to the will of the Father, John 4:3, Jesus left Judea, departed again for Galilee." It says there in verse 4 that "he had to pass through Samaria." I love that. Had to, required to, he must. He's not in a hurry. He's not anxious, he's not worried, fearful; he's following a schedule. He's following the dictates of the father by the direction of the Holy Spirit.

This is where we come to stage two of Jesus' return. It's been a while. Let me remind you of where we are in our outline. By the way, we're not going to finish our outline this morning. I just want you to be assured of that. Okay? But first major point, circumstances of Jesus' return: He returned in power and then he returned to Galilee. And then he returned to Galilee, like we said, in three stages. Stage one was exposure in Judea, that's what we saw there.

Stage two, we'll do this briefly, evangelism in Samaria, evangelism in Samaria. You all know the story. Jesus stopped at a well in Samaria. He had a conversation with a Samaritan woman. She turned out to be an immoral woman who had five husbands.

She's on her sixth man. And for a rabbi of growing popularity, gathering a loyal following, this conversation was going to be perceived as a career-killer by several accounts, at least in the eyes of the general population.

What's he doing consorting with a woman like that? The Jews would give him low marks for going through Samaria in the first place. The Samaritans were the unfaithful Israelites who remained in the land during the Babylonian captivity. And the Babylonians shipped some of their own pagans over there into the land, and they interbred with those people, creating the Samaritans. That's the Samaritan people. Their religion was basically a cultish offshoot of Judaism. They were absolutely despised by the Jews on several counts.

But Jesus had to pass through Samaria. He had to meet this woman. Her ethnicity, her false religion, even her serious immorality didn't dissuade him at all. This conversation to evangelize this woman is a demonstration of the kindness of redeeming love that the father intended to show through Messiah's ministry. I'm relieved, aren't you? I'm no different

than that woman. It may have offended the sensitivities of the religious, the cultured among Jerusalem's elite, and it clearly did, as indicated by slanders throughout his ministry, but Jesus didn't pay that any mind.

He'd come to seek and save the lost. His evangelism of this woman provided an occasion for him to teach his astonished disciples to lead to the evangelism of the entire village of Siccar. "God so loved the world," right? Not just the Jews, but Gentiles, too. "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," and so all are the targets of his redeeming mercy and love.

Well, few days he spent in Samaria meant his fame preceded him into Galilee. Stage One: Exposure in Judea, stage two: Evangelism in Samaria, stage three: Establishment in Galilee. And Jesus stayed briefly with the Samaritans, which had to be quite the cross-cultural experience for his bewildered disciples. But he had to keep moving.

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Look at John 4:43, end of the chapter, John 4. "After," the, "two days, he departed for Galilee." For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown. "So when he came to Galilee, all the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they had gone to the feast."

So we're back in Galilee again. He's well-received by the Galileans. There they were. They, they sa, they saw what he did at the Temple. They heard his teaching. They saw him perform miracles. They were thrilled that he had come back to Galilee. This is where Jesus established his ministry. All three of the synoptic writers, all three focus on this Galilean ministry. Galilee is, you remember, is the northern part of Israel, Judea in the southern part. Galilee is one of the tetrarchies ruled by Herod Antipas.

Jesus goes into that region. It's more of a country feel; it's not an urban feel. The Sea of Galilee is one of the major sources of life and industry. The fishing trade was there. It's a land of agriculture. It's a bit simplistic to put it this way,

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but generally speaking, Galileans are like salt-of-the-earth kind of people, like farmers, ag-workers, all that. They're practically-minded, they're hard-working farmers, fishermen. And to the south in Judea with Jerusalem at the center of Judean life and culture, that's more of the white-collar folks. That's the academics, the priesthood, the political rulers.

And you can see it by the names of the places. The prominent feature in the north is a large lake, Galilee; prominence in the southern part is the city, Jerusalem. It's the same thing in their day as it is in our day. There's a bit of despising going on between county and city. Right? Galilean folks, judean folk, Judean folks, they were definitely two different kinds of cultures, not entirely alien from one another. They shared the same Scriptures, the same Abrahamic heritage, but they were very different and they had two different levels of sophistication, different ways of thinking and living. The Judeans looked down on the Galileans as a bunch of uncultured, uneducated, hayseeds.

And the Galileans, they looked at the Judeans, especially those residing in Jerusalem, with a large bit of disdain. Some of that

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was warranted because of this political, religious collusion and corruption, scandalous issues. Hardworking farmers, fishermen, they could see right through all that nonsense. They despised the corruption, the pandering to Rome, the politics. It's kind of like we, in Colorado, look at people on the left coast and over in D.C. and New York, kinda look down at them.

Good times begin when Jesus there gets to Galilee, as Jesus visits Cana, where he turned water into wine. There at the end of Chapter 4, after the Samaritan evangelism, he visits Cana, where he had turned the water into wine. Everybody there is happy to see him. Nobody wants to let him buy his own food at a restaurant or anything like that. They're not going to let him pay for anything, right? They say, hey, your name Jesus. You did the water with the wine thing? Ah, that is awesome. And it got better because he healed an official's son. And verse 54 summarizes that "This is now the second sign Jesus did when he came from Judea to Galilee."

All that to say, you now know what's behind Luke 4:14. And you can turn back there, by the way, just briefly. When Luke tells

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us that “Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee,” you know what kind of power we’re talking about. It had been manifest, it had been talked about in such, to such a degree that “a report about him went out throughout all the surrounding country.” You need to realize the level of excitement, of anticipation, of expectation that surrounded his showing up in Galilee.

Galilee is the perfect place for him to establish his ministry. It’s got the right cultural disposition. It’s got the right distance from Jerusalem. It’s got the right kind of people who live there, their natural sympathies. Jesus would have time there to teach and connect with people who could understand. He could do it all apart from opposition, immediate, pressing opposition from political and religious establishment. He could do some positive teaching, lay down positively the principles of his ministry, teach the people about the God they thought they knew, but didn’t know. So he went back to Galilee because it was the perfect place.

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He also went back to Galilee because of the prophecy in Isaiah 9:1 and 2. It said, You, "Zebulun, land of Naphtali ... the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; and those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them the light shone."

So here he is. He has returned to Galilee, he's fulfilling prophecy, he's establishing his ministry. He's been on the move for a year and a half or so since his baptism. And now that he's got everybody's attention, he is ready to settle into ministry. We're going to start to see that next time.

Father, thank you for what we've learned this morning. It seems like we don't ever have enough time to really get it all in. But, Father, you're sovereign over that as well. We all trust that. We all see that. We just pray that you would use things we've talked about today to give us an appreciation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Help us to see how great and glorious and marvelous that he is.

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Thank you for not leaving us without a witness, but giving us the Gospel of John to fill in those early years so we can understand the expectations that Jesus faced when he walked into that synagogue in Nazareth, his hometown, so we can understand such a violent opposition to his words of mercy. We pray, Father, that we would not be a synagogue like that. We pray that we would be a church with hearts wide open, ready to receive the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.