

**Let's Look at Jesus
Vision Lesson #01**

*Engaging lost and broken people
to lead them to Jesus Christ
in order to find hope, healing, and redemption.*

Introduction:

As we begin a new year, South Plains as a congregation is adopting a new vision, which you see written above. The leadership of South Plains seeks to live fully as a congregation in ways that God calls us to be as his church. To ensure we are doing these things, we have spent some time in study and in prayer asking the question: What does it mean to “be like Jesus?”

We believe that God’s people are called to follow Jesus, which means more than just a cognitive assent that Jesus is God’s son, but we follow in the true Biblical sense, which means doing the things Jesus did. When a teacher in Jesus’s day called individuals to be students (we would call them disciples) of the teacher, the literal meaning of the word follow meant “walk in the footsteps of” that teacher. If you were to be a student/disciple of a teacher, then you would give up everything to be sure you were walking down the same path: doing the same things the teacher does, saying the things he does, and having the same attitudes and concerns as your teacher.

Our vision seeks to help us better walk down the path that Jesus has already walked. Over the next eight weeks, we will explore that vision to help introduce it to members of your One Group. Our study will also help us to learn how to better put that vision into action, so that we not just see the nice posters of the vision on the wall, but more importantly, show that vision through the way we live.

Text:

Luke 4.14-30

Leader Notes:

Today’s lesson and the week’s assignment attempts to help individuals go through the basic outline of the process the leadership of South Plains went through in defining our new vision. Much time and prayer was spent looking at the entire New Testament in an attempt to answer the question: What did Jesus do while on earth that we also should be doing today? Luke’s introduction of Jesus’ public teaching ministry serves as a paradigm for what we discover in the entire gospel (as well as the other three gospels) as to the things Jesus sought to do.

There are two general points I want to be sure are communicated as you go through today’s discussion.

First, it is significant that Luke uses the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah as Jesus’ first teaching words. It is much like an introduction that we give to someone else: we want certain things to be communicated because they identify us. You know me better when you know this fact or that fact about me. Without certain information, you cannot really know who each of us are individually, just as without understanding Jesus as the fulfillment of the Year of the Lord’s Favor (see Isaiah 61), you do not really understand the purpose for Jesus’ ministry. I would recommend you read through Isaiah 61 prior to meeting with your group, just to gain a perspective of the entire passage from which Jesus quotes.

Second, there may not have been a great deal of surprise that Jesus highlights the importance of the good news going to the poor or freedom being given to the prisoners (etc.), but even as Jesus spoke these words, the implication of looking to these types of people began to shake the status quo. It is interesting to me that in verse 22 the people love what Jesus is saying, but just five verses later, they are furious at him (v. 28). What changed? What changed was Jesus' mention that Gentile individuals were given the good news of God's favor.

It would seem that we are all about the oppressed being set free, as long as we are those people. Jesus' message challenges the idea that those within the community of faith are God's preferred people. In reality, Jesus spends much more time with those outside of faith. This pours directly into the statement in the vision that prompts us to engage lost and broken people. The idea of "lost and broken" people simply serves to represent those who stand outside the community of God's people. If we are not looking outward at people outside our circles, we have missed Jesus' message and example. More on this in the next couple of weeks.

Suggested Group Meeting Agenda:

While some of the later lessons in this series may include some activities, today's lesson will follow a format that most would consider a "normal" group agenda.

Spend time visiting prior to the actual group time. If you have snacks or a meal, enjoy some time being together sharing those.

The Icebreaker Question asks your group to introduce themselves to one another, so be sure you use this question as you start your group. You may already know one another, but it leads into the discussion questions, so go ahead and do this even if it seems awkward.

Read the Luke 4.14-30 passage prior to spending time talking about the discussion questions.

Assign the "To Do For Next Week" section. We will not always have an assignment, but this one is important. Really encourage your group to participate in this exercise. The reason for this exercise is it allows people to recreate the process leadership went through in defining the vision. We can use a passage that is a great example of what we find in the gospels (such as Luke 4), but going through a gospel helps cement in our minds the importance of being people who engage others, leading them to Jesus, and finding redemption. This is found all the way through all of the gospels: we want people to go through the process of realizing that for themselves.

Close your time in prayer. I am requesting that part of your prayer time being a time where we ask God to lead us in HIS vision. Ask that he help us live out this vision in a way that changes South Plains and the community we live in here in Lubbock.

Discussion Questions:

Icebreaker Question: Spend time going around the room letting each group member introduce themselves to everyone in the group. (While most of you will probably already be acquainted, there may be people who do not know one another.) Now, go back around and have everyone tell each other one or two things they consider information they would most want others to know about themselves.

Why is it important for us to communicate certain things about ourselves during our first introductions with one another? What sort of things would fall in this category and how do you ensure others know these things when you introduce yourself to them?

- The words of Jesus we read in Luke 4 are the first public words Jesus speaks. Why do you think it was important for him to start with *these* words? (Notice that Jesus found this specific passage to discuss—it was not an assigned passage for that day.) What do you think is most significant about these words?
- Give the general sense or reaction to Jesus up to this point in Luke’s gospel. As he begins to teach, what is the response of people to him? What causes the people to be so amazed at him? How do you think you would have reacted to hearing these words from the prophet Isaiah and Jesus’ interpretation of them?
- In what ways might these words from the prophet have been good news for the people in that synagogue when Jesus began teaching? In what ways might they have been interpreted in a way that would have caused individuals to fear the changes that were to come? Why do we often fear changes such as Jesus says he is bringing about in the prophecy of Isaiah?
- What causes the mood toward to Jesus to turn in this passage (from amazement at his words to being furious at him)? Why are Jesus’ words about going to a Gentile people (the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian, in this example) so shocking and angering to these people? How are we tempted to stick with our own people? How does this impact how we look towards others?
- As you think about the words Jesus spoke during this his first public teaching moment in Luke, what sort of implications do you get about how you and I need to act as followers of Jesus? Do you find his words to be simply descriptive of Jesus’ life or also prescriptive of how his church should live today? Give reasons for your answer.
- How well do we proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for the prisoners, etc. and how well do we help set the oppressed free? How can we do a better job of this in the coming days?

To Do For Next Week:

For next week, encourage all the members of your group to spend time reading through one of the gospels. (You may let group members pick any gospel they choose, assign one gospel to the entire group, or assign specific people to specific gospels so that all gospels are covered.)

The purpose for reading through the gospel is to ask ourselves: If we are going to be like Jesus, what exactly did Jesus do?

To help with this exercise, encourage your group members to read with a journal, taking notes on the following questions:

1. What is happening in the passage you are reading? (It is helpful to use each subsection as a “passage” within the gospel.)
2. Who are the people involved in this passage?
3. How does Jesus interact with these people: what was his message and what did he do?

After you have completed this reading, go back through your notes and try to come up with a summary of these questions for the entire gospel. Be prepared to share your findings with the group as a whole next meeting.