

Day 140, Luke 4

by David Servant

Jesus' ministry was limited by the faith of the people and the Holy Spirit's will, but He still accomplished God's purposes through His obedience and trust in the Father.

Scripture: Matthew 4:1

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Faith And Trust"

Description

David Servant preaches on the prerequisites for Jesus' public ministry, emphasizing the need for baptism in the Holy Spirit and undergoing testing to prove faithfulness. Jesus faced unbelief in His hometown, limiting the manifestation of miracles due to lack of faith. Despite performing miracles in Capernaum, Nazareth's skepticism hindered Jesus. The limitations Jesus faced in His ministry were tied to people's faith and the Holy Spirit's will in manifesting gifts. This sermon highlights the challenges Jesus encountered in His ministry and the importance of faith and trust in God's work.

Transcript

Before Jesus could begin His public ministry, two things had to take place. First, He needed to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Up until that time, Jesus had no special anointing for ministry. If Jesus needed to be baptized in the Holy Spirit before He began His ministry, it would seem reasonable to think that we, too, would need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit before we begin in ministry.

Second, Jesus had to be tested. Notice that it was the Holy Spirit who led Him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (4:1). Similarly, every believer goes through times of testing. God only promotes those whom He can trust. If we prove ourselves faithful in small things, then He knows He can trust us with bigger things. Jesus, of course, passed His forty days of testing with flying colors. He never sinned.

In Mark's Gospel we read of the unbelief Jesus encountered during His second visit to His hometown of Nazareth---unbelief that prevented Him from doing any miracles there except healing a few people with minor ailments (Mark 6:5). Luke's Gospel gives us details of Jesus' first visit to His hometown. He began by reading a text from Isaiah that actually spoke of Himself and how He was anointed by the Holy Spirit for supernatural ministry. According to Isaiah, the Messiah (which means "anointed one") was anointed to preach, to bring deliverance, and to heal. He wanted the people of Nazareth to believe that He was God's anointed. If they had, they could have received the benefits. But they would not believe.

Jesus had already performed quite a few miracles in Capernaum, and the news had no doubt traveled to Nazareth, only about 25 miles away. They had been waiting to see their "hometown boy turned miracle-worker" perform some tricks for them---not with expectancy, but with skepticism. Jesus told them a prophet is not without honor except in His hometown, and then He proved His point with two biblical examples. God used Elijah to supernaturally provide for the needs of a non-Jewish widow of Sidon even when there were many widows in Israel then who also needed help. Additionally, Elisha was used by God to cleanse a heathen leper even though there were plenty of Israelite lepers in his time.

In both cases, God used His prophets in gifts of the Holy Spirit. Gifts of the Holy Spirit operate as the Spirit wills (1 Cor. 12:11). They did not operate as Elijah and Elisha willed. Both of those prophets obviously would have used their gifts, if they could have, to help their own Jewish countrymen rather than Gentiles. Jesus was apparently under the same limitations as they were. Although He was divine, in His ministry Jesus operated as a man anointed by the Holy Spirit. Thus Jesus faced two major limitations to His effectiveness. First, He was limited by the faith or lack of faith of the people to whom He ministered. Second, He was limited to the Holy Spirit's will in manifesting gifts of the Holy Spirit. For some reason the Holy Spirit didn't will to manifest any of His gifts when Jesus was in Nazareth. (Perhaps unbelief was the reason?)

Jesus' audience, who initially were so pleased with His message, wanted to murder Him by the end. (I know the feeling.) They didn't like hearing how God passed up Israelites to bless Gentiles. This incident gives us insight into what Paul was up against from Jews as He preached the gospel to Gentiles. Incidentally, Jesus' escape from the murderous crowd must have been supernatural.

I've been blessed to visit, on several trips to Israel, the ruins of Capernaum along the sea of Galilee, and the supposed foundation stones of Peter's house there. A Roman Catholic church has been built there that looks somewhat like a flying saucer, and it is suspended directly above where Peter's home was supposed to have been. Peter would be shocked to see it today, and even more shocked to see what goes on inside that church every Sunday!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/day-140-luke-4/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net

