

The Gospel as Jubilee

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Luke 4:16-30

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 proclaim liberty to the captives

Main Questions: Why are some of the people angry? Would we be angry at Jesus?

Jesus Issues a Financial Threat with Plenty of OT Baggage

- Pattern of response: appreciation, rejection, judgment, wrath, murder
- Why angry? Not Messiah claim alone; they wanted tricks; not all angry
- He cites Isaiah 61: "The Spirit of the Lord..."
- "acceptable" or "favorable" year of the Lord: to pay a debt (Lev. 26:41,43)
- Lev. 25:10, "proclaim liberty throughout all the land"
- So what, a nice, spiritualized expression of the Gospel?
- No, Jesus declares He's reviving the much-rejected Jubilee: rest for land, return of property, personal liberty
- Andre Trocme, "Moses had instituted a genuine social revolution"
- Walter Brueggemann, "You must give it back, even if you own it legally"

Why was the Jubilee an Especially Sore Spot?

- Think of all the OT from the perspective of land
- Gift given, gift occupied, gift ingratitude, gift trashed (no jubilees), gift taken back (exile), gift returned (post exile), gift despised again, bigger gift (world) given to another (gentiles)
- Israel refused to carry out the Jubilee
- One disastrous attempt reneged, under Zedekiah, Jer. 34:13-17
- 2 Chr. 36:15ff, exiled, "until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths."
- After the exile, a second Jubilee attempt, Neh. 5:1-13, "Restore now to them"
- After this *restoration*, though, they again cease doing justice
- Jesus appears declaring a Jubilee; to "fulfill the law," Mt. 5:17-20,

Jubilee Declared and Heeded in the New Covenant

- Matt. 9:5, 6, "the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"
- Matt. 18:27-32, King who remits debts,
- Jubilee in the Lord's Prayer, Mt. 6:12, "Forgive us our debts"
- Luke 5:11, Peter, Andrew, James, John, "left everything and followed him."
- Mt. 19:27, Mk. 10:28, "We have left everything to follow you!"
- Lk. 11:41, Pharisees, "But give what is inside the dish to the poor"
- Lk. 12:32ff, "Sell your possessions and give to the poor."
- Lk. 16:25, "you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things"
- Mk. 10:29, restoration promise: "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters"
- Acts 3:21ff, "until the time comes for God to restore everything"

- Lk. 18:22, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor”
- Lk. 21:3, “All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth”
- Finally good Zacchaeus, Lk. 19:1-9, “I give half of my possessions to the poor”
- Most significantly, with the coming of the Spirit, the Church now honors Jesus’ Jubilee, Acts 4:32-35, “neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.”

Marks of the Church

- Power of naming
- Roman Catholic: One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic
- Protestant: Sound doctrine, Right admin of sacraments, Right admin of discipline
- But Jesus, Jn. 13:34, “By this all will know that you are My disciples”
- Old Covenant church, Micah 6:6-8, “to do justly, to love mercy”

Suspicious Responses to Jubilee, to “Sell All”

- That was just a special command for apostles
- That was just a special command for the first century
- The jubilee is just a leftist issue, and I’m a conservative
- People are poor due to irresponsibility
- Poor complain out of the sin of envy
- If *Jesus* asked me, I’d give up all
- Let’s boycott and make political changes like the “leftists”

Questions for Meditation

- Is the Gospel something to believe or do?
- Am I part of the comfortable rich that the OT prophets constantly warn against?
- Would I have been angry at Jesus’ call for Jubilee?
- Is the Gospel something to believe or do?
- Is my life constantly frustrating, petty because I’m not centrally doing justice?
- Is the world Jesus calls us to very, very different than modern TV America?
- Is my hesitance toward Jubilee maturity or immaturity?
- How can I be a Zacchaeus and not a Rich Young Ruler?
- What would it really take to get you to give up half your income and property?

Imagine the Romance of Jubilee

- Need both feasting and fasting, celebration and rest
- Why is God so hard on the rich (us)? Raising nobility; God loves to rescue
- Thrill of challenge: Modern American Empire as Goliath
- Masculine romance: rescue, deliver, danger: your daughter in a sweatshop?
- Feminine romance: healing, nurture, giving life
- Isaiah 58:6ff, “Is this not the fast that I have chosen:...To undo the heavy burdens”
- Final Jubilee Check at the End of Life, Mt. 25:33ff, “I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in”