

Small Group Questions – June 19/22 – Leader's Guide

Read Luke 4:16-21

1. Luke records Jesus' inaugural speech to His public ministry as the One claiming to be the Messiah who is anointed with the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus as Messiah has been anointed for a particular task. First, He was anointed to proclaim good news to the poor. What does the proclamation of good news mean to the disenfranchised and the marginalized of the world?

Good news to outcasts, misfits, and the oppressed of society means for them liberty, salvation, forgiveness, and restoration. And this is not coming from the world but from heaven. For this good news to be announced means there is an end to oppression, bigotry, exploitation, and apathy on the earth. Salvation comes from above and so, the way of this world is coming to an end.

2. Jesus was anointed Messiah for a second task: to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. The year of the Lord's favour refers to the Jewish jubilee year, a special time in Israel when all debts were forgiven, all slaves freed, and all lands given back to their ancestral owners. How do we live out the proclamation that the jubilee year has already come to our world in Jesus Christ?

We live out the jubilee year by practising radical trust, radical forgiveness, radical generosity, radical rest, and radical welcome. The jubilee year as a concept entailed the large-scale reshuffling of society: its economy and wealth, its social classes and dynamics. It was set in place to protect the poorest and the most vulnerable to exploitation. There is no standard way of living out this radical way of compassion but it will require a lot of creativity, discernment, wisdom, and sacrifice on our parts who have the means and the privilege in order to include, bestow, and embrace others into God's fold.

Read Isaiah 61:3-7

1. Jesus was anointed Messiah for a third task. In Isaiah 61, the Messiah anoints the disenfranchised and the marginalized to become rebuilders, repairers, priests, and ministers of God in the world. How have we witnessed the disenfranchised and the marginalized rebuild and repair our world, and become priests and ministers of God?

As Christianity spread throughout the world during imperial and colonial times, the faith slowly empowered the less powerful, liberated the often enslaved, and upheld those who were at the bottom. Christianity taught them to forgive, not to seek revenge, to pray for and bless their enemies, and to trust in God's power over and above all earthly regimes. The Christian poor and slaves slowly toppled down tyranny, upturned corrupt governments, reformed economies, and founded and instituted more compassionate ways of political and social living. Such are the firstfruits of the new creation in this world. The harvest is yet to come.

2. Followers of Jesus have been called Christians since the time of the early Church in Antioch. Christians mean "little messiahs". It's an appropriate title for followers of Jesus as we live out our "anointed" lives in faith. Just as Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit, Christians are also anointed with the same Spirit. How do we fulfill our lives in the same anointing and in the same messianic task?

We must first rely on the Holy Spirit and be filled with Him every day: by prayer, by faith, by mutual submission to one another. We cannot fulfill anything apart from the power of the Spirit. We must be aware of our inability and ascribe to God all success if we are to accomplish anything in His Name. In that same filling and anointing of the Spirit, we can emulate Jesus Christ in true self-sacrifice, with an attitude of generosity and compassion, seeking the best for others, and entrusting everything we do and say into God's hands.